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2 Vols

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GENUINE

AND

SPURIOUS RELIGION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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Bayer. Staatsbibliothek

LONDON :
R. CLAY, PRINTER, BREAD STREET HILL.

GENUINE

AND

SPURIOUS RELIGION:

A COMPENDIOUS,
SCRIPTURAL AND CONSECUTIVE VIEW OF THE ORIGIN,
DEVELOPMENT, AND CHARACTER OF DIFFERENT
SYSTEMS OF BELIEF.

BY THE

REV. JOHN MÜHLEISEN,

Of the United Church of England and Ireland;

LATE AGENT OF THE CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY FOR AFRICA AND THE EAST;
CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE EGYPTIAN LITERARY ASSOCIATION, ETC.

Ἔχομεν δὲ τὸν θησαυρὸν τοῦτον ἐν ὀστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν.—2 COR. IV. 7.

Si tamen in eo erraverim et amice de errore monear, seu publice seu privatim, aures præbebo: in hoc unum intentus, ut hi aliique labores mei cedant ad triumphum veritatis et fidei Evangelicæ, ultimumque finem omnium actionum nostrarum gloriam solius et unius veri Dei, Patris, Filii et Spiritus Sancti.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

J. H. JACKSON, ISLINGTON GREEN;

SEELEYS, FLEET STREET AND HANOVER STREET.

1849.

BIBLIOTHECA
REGIA
MONACENSIS.

Preface.

THE Author of the following pages contemplates publishing a series of smaller works upon some of the most important subjects connected with the East. He could not, however, seriously think of carrying out his favourite plan without a number of grave but desultory inquiries presenting themselves to his mind, which seemed to require some preliminary consideration. Hence the appearance of the present work, which comprises a few general reflections upon the History of Genuine and Spurious Religion.

The object of the present work being of a purely practical nature and tendency, the Author has brought its contents before a Christian public in a less scientific and philosophical form than he could otherwise have wished to do. His design has been to write

for the immediate benefit of those who have not sufficient means, powers, opportunity, time, or inclination, to obtain direct information from the various sources which are scattered abroad upon a vast field of scientific research.

It is scarcely necessary to state that part of the subject which constitutes the theme of the present work, is beset with singular dangers and difficulties. The student of Eastern systems of Mythology is, at all times, encompassed with a series of disadvantages of the first magnitude. The character of foreign languages, the sometimes arbitrary theories of otherwise able and zealous men on what has been rendered accessible by translations from those languages; the circumstance, that notions which have been erroneously formed from want of more explicit information, are sometimes propagated from one authority to another; the fact that, however much has been done in the department of Oriental research, much remains yet to be achieved, to bring it beyond the state of infancy; the fact, moreover, that those very authorities which we find in the East, and on which we must chiefly depend, are strange compounds of facts and fictions, mixtures of historic events and poetic

coruscations,—all these and many other circumstances are highly unfavourable to the acquisition of a sound view of spurious systems of Religion.

The advantages under which the Author has attempted to give a general view of the leading systems of ancient and modern Paganism have been neither small nor few in number. He has enjoyed access for a considerable time to English, Continental, Classical, and Oriental resources. He was enabled, by a lengthened and laborious sojourn in divers countries of Africa and the East, to acquire to some extent a knowledge of several Oriental languages; to examine the most magnificent, and at the same time the most important, classical remains of Pagan antiquity; to ascertain the peculiar views and feelings of Heathen and Mohammedan nations, from personal observation; to trace the actual working of the human mind, under the various phases of religious error, and to study spurious systems of belief, as they are practically expounded in the general character, and exemplified in the moral complexion, of whole nations and communities.

The Author feels greatly indebted to the valuable labours of several eminent writers. As it was, how-

ever, foreign to his plan to crowd the pages of this work with critical annotations and detailed references to an endless variety of authorities, they have never been acknowledged. Nor would it, under any circumstances, be in his power to determine, in numerous instances, what has been derived from others, having omitted to identify his authorities at a period when he gathered his information for mere *practical* purposes, without the remotest view of himself writing upon the subject. For the satisfaction, however, of such persons as may feel desirous of obtaining further information respecting the numerous sources to which the Author is indebted for part of his materials, an imperfect catalogue has been added to the second volume of the work.

There being nothing more detrimental and less favourable to scientific inquiries than a systematical spirit, or a mind *stereotyped* by a set of prejudices and preconceived theories, pains have been taken to acquire and preserve that kind of mental type which can be changed, enlarged, or contracted, as may be found expedient on the acquisition of additional light and more accurate information. New discoveries suggest, or may suggest, fresh theories; new wine requires new

bottles, and new facts demand, or may demand, new systems. It was by acting on this simple principle, that a Baconian spirit emancipated the intellect of Europe from the bondage of being guided by deep-rooted prejudice and the authority of antiquated systems. Whilst it is pleasant to agree at all times with people who are looked upon as authorities in the various paths of Literature, and who, indeed, have a just claim upon our regard and veneration, there may be circumstances in which it must be our motto :— "Amicus Socrates, amicus Plato, amicus Aristoteles, sed magis amica VERITAS."

When, therefore, the author has deemed it necessary to deviate occasionally from the mode in which part of the subject has been hitherto represented in this country, it was neither ignorance, nor vanity, nor wantonness, which induced him to differ from venerable Authors to whom he feels otherwise deeply indebted.

It is hoped that the very brief account respecting the grand and marvellous *Jubilee*, which was celebrated in the brilliant orbits of our planetary system at the time of our Saviour's advent, will tend to extol the mystery of godliness, that God was manifested in the

flesh when the *fulness of time* was come! Such is the result of astronomical calculations which have been recently made by some of the most eminent men of our age, and which has, as far as we know, never before been brought before the British public. When Uranus, the remotest of all the planets, had completed the fiftieth of his revolutions around the sun, each of which being a complete Theocratical year of the planetary system, the multitude of the Heavenly host sounded the evangelical silver trumpets of a universal Jubilee on the fields of Bethlehem Ephratah, "praising God, and saying, *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men.*"

In perfect harmony with the original design of the work, the Author has taken pains to preserve the style of the argument free, as much as possible, from the appearance of controversial elements. These may well grace the pages of a more scientific performance; but they are, unquestionably, stumbling-blocks in works of a more simple and popular nature. There were, however, some few occasions in which the interests of divine truth demanded a peremptory exposure of certain pernicious notions, by which the poor victims of a spurious and infidel Philosophy have

recently attempted to impeach the originality of revealed Religion. It was our object to expose, briefly though it might be, certain plausible arguments, by which it was made to appear as if some of the peculiarities of our blessed Religion were plagiarized from the Mythological systems of the ancient Egyptians, Persians, and Phœnicians. Again, some palpable errors, into which honest and intelligent writers were, from unavoidable causes, at times betrayed, have been invariably rectified, it is hoped, in the tone and spirit of Christian authorship. "Homines sumus omnes et erroribus obnoxii." If, however, in spite of the general frailty of all human efforts, the following work contribute another mite towards a sounder and more comprehensive view of the actual and real History of True and Counterfeit Religion, which is still desirable to the comparative analysis of an important chapter of the history of our race; if it tend, under God's blessing, to bring the deplorable character, the melancholy position, and the just claims of the Pagan world, in a new form and with more emphasis, before the Christian public; if by any means the cause of *Christianization* and Civilization, of science and humanity, be advanced: in short, if in any measure glory result

"*to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good-will towards men,*" the arduous labour of thought, and the toil of study and research bestowed upon the subject, will be considered abundantly rewarded. "In magnis voluisse sat est."

Finally, the Author embraces the opportunity of this his first appearance upon the field of literary enterprise, to express his very *cordial thanks* to a numerous circle of generous friends, for the kind manner in which they came forward to encourage him in his arduous undertaking, by offering to subscribe for the work. And he would fail in his duty were he to omit expressing his deep sense of obligation to some of the Right Reverend Prelates of our Church, and others distinguished by their position, learning, and piety, for the encouragement, the kind advice, and the valuable assistance with which they countenanced both the composition and the eventual publication of this work.

LITTLE HAMPTON,
Oct. 23, 1849.

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GENUINE

AND

SPURIOUS RELIGION.

CHAPTER I.

DEFINITION, AND PRELIMINARY REMARKS UPON THE SUBJECT OF RELIGION.

1. The term "Religion" has been generally adopted to express the highest and the happiest relation between God Almighty and man his dependent creature. As it, however, never once occurs in Holy Scripture in the sense in which it is commonly understood, and as we have neither isolated historical, nor yet abstract doctrinal definitions upon the subject in Holy Writ, it cannot be a matter of surprise to find a variety of opinions as to the precise import of the term under consideration.

Religion, according to the definition of some, simply signifies our duty to God. According to others, it implies those sentiments, affections, and feelings, which relate to the Deity. Others, again, consider Religion

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to be synonymous with the worship, the fear, or the knowledge of God. Again, others identify Religion with devotion, with piety, or virtue. And according to others, again, it consists in a reverence for divine things, or in a feeling of dependence upon Almighty God. It will, however, easily appear that neither of these and similar definitions can satisfy the enlightened mind of the Christian believer. True Religion consists neither in the one nor the other of these definitions, which, in a general way, are equally applicable to the vilest species of Pagan superstition.

Whenever we speak respecting Religion, we speak of a subject "whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity." It has neither grown upon Grecian, nor upon Roman, nor yet upon British soil. Religion cannot be said to be the indigenous plant of any certain part of the globe. We may, indeed, trace its salutary effects from country to country, and we may follow its blessed footsteps from one nation to another; but being a sojourner upon earth, and a stranger among men, and having its origin, its home, its hopes, and its dignities, in a higher sphere of existence, the wind at last "bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth."

Much learning has been wasted, and great ingenuity has been displayed, in order to discover the precise etymological derivation of the term "Religion." It was found to be a classical word, appertaining to *Pagan*

antiquity. It was discovered that the term was of *Roman* origin. But the very circumstance of its being derived from Pagan antiquity seemed to be against all hope of solving the difficulties; for what communion has the foul superstition of the ancient Romans with the pure and undefiled Religion, which has diffused a flood of peace and happiness, of joy and comfort, amongst a sorrow-stricken and desponding race of men, and which, moreover, contains the foundation for the brightest hopes of the Christian believer? Religion, in a Christian sense of the term, cannot be estimated by the original signification of some poor and insipid term which has been borrowed from classical Paganism. Or what profit and pleasure can it yield to the Christian mind to hear of a variety of perplexing speculations as to its probable derivation; speculations, moreover, which have been put forth by Cicero, Lactantius, and similar heathen authorities of classic renown? If it were even probable that we could at length obtain the orthodox derivation, it would at all events afford but little satisfaction to the practical and the intelligent Christian to know what have been the ideas of some Pagan sage, in the olden times, respecting Religion. Philology is a science which assumes, indeed, a sacred character in the documents of divine revelation; but it must be remembered, in the present instance, that the Church of Christ associated very different ideas with the term Religion, from those that were attached to it by classical Paganism.

Equally futile, but less harmless than the above, has been the attempt to furnish a definition of Religion upon the principles of a bold and arbitrary Eclecticism in religious matters. There have been some people who ventured to place the Christian religion on a footing of equality with other religious systems of belief, which are severally considered as being of the same kind and species. They profess that they have adopted these latitudinarian views in the hope that the fundamental notions of religion will be sounder and fuller, and that they will be the more liberal and free from prejudice the more carefully the several systems of Religion are consulted and brought into account. According to this method, all religious systems on record are to be examined and put together, and from this aggregate amount of religious truth and religious error we are to abstract what is to be understood by the subject of Religion. Whatever happens to be at variance with the individual views, inclinations, and prejudices of the eclectic compilers, is dissevered by the operation of a bold criticism, and rejected as unprofitable and superfluous. In thus forgetting that the question is not, which is a better and which a worse system of belief, but which is the true Religion, and which are spurious creeds, they likewise forget, that if any given number of religious systems be false, they are not only warranted but even bound to reject them all. This method, therefore, leads to no satisfactory result. Every fresh attempt will necessarily

increase the number of spurious systems of Religion; and we are therefore obliged either to embrace an unnatural compound of falsehood and truth, or else define Religion from the inspired documents of the Bible as our sole infallible guide in religious matters.

2. In defining Religion specifically from the divinely revealed and authenticated source of the Holy Scriptures, we escape on the one hand the contradictory and uncertain definitions from etymological resources; and we avoid, on the other hand, the dangers arising from the arbitrary measures of a religious Eclecticism. We are not only treading on solid ground, but we have the advantage of tracing Religion from its most primitive stages down to its consummate perfection. In full harmony with all the other works of the Almighty, we observe a gradual development of an all-embracing subject. Every form in the animal or vegetable kingdom has its embryo state, advancing by an almost imperceptible progress towards maturity. We observe the same characteristic in the system of revealed Religion. According to the analogy which pervades all the works and ways of the Almighty, Religion was gradually developed through a long succession of ages.

The method of appointing a Religion in the above manner was attended with the peculiar advantage, that it bespoke its practical tendency, by being placed before mankind in a succession of historic events, and by thus adapting itself upon every stage to the

religious wants of the moral nature of man. The condition of man demanded not only a *revealed* Religion, but a Religion at the same time which was gradually developed, and which entered at all times practically into the feeble elements of sinful humanity.

The object of Religion was the happiness and salvation of man. As man, however, was a morally free agent, it could only be realised on his part by a voluntary, free, spontaneous, and conscious act of liberty. The moral liberty of man, however, would have been destroyed, his faculties would have been overwhelmed and overpowered, if revelation had poured forth its whole contents, either at the commencement or the middle of the development of true Religion, without reference to the wants, circumstances, and capacities of man. But the divine gift was too precious ever to be forcibly thrown upon those who neither had a heart to desire, nor yet a mind to appreciate its value.

We have in the history of man a most mysterious complication of action and reaction; but amidst all the changes and chances of human life, God graciously condescends to reveal his character; and from the commencement of the history of Religion, God "humbled himself," as it were, and in his dealings with man was "found in the fashion of man." New revelations, by an immutable principle, were ever followed by renewed and enlarged capacities on the part of man; and "to him, that hath, is given that he

might have it more abundantly." Religion, therefore, grew with the growth of man. But in growing amongst men, it received none of the frail elements of humanity into its system. It enters into the world, without being of the world, and without becoming of the world; and as it acted neither as a charm, nor yet by force, it was placed beyond the reach of abuse and misapprehension on the part of man.

Hence, also, as regards the method by which God appointed a Religion, "he doeth all things well." Whilst he would not speak to the world at large through his Son, before he had spoken by fathers and prophets to a particular nation, he yet spoke at all times exactly so much, and in such a manner, as mankind was prepared to receive and able to bear. It was the purpose of God's eternal love to cause his face to shine brightly upon his people; but in order to prepare them for the splendour of this light, they were to pass through a succession of preparatory stages. Whilst spurious creeds rendered comparatively pure ideas more and more dark and emblematical in the process of time; we observe in true Religion a gradual progress from a general to a more detailed revelation of heavenly truths.

In true Religion, therefore, possession and want, enjoyment and hope, fulfilment and prophecy, are taking alternately place, until all be perfect, and the things which were in part are done away. It was, therefore, calculated to engage the heart and to win the

intellectual faculties of man without forcing or bewitching either the one or the other. It would certainly have been in the power of God to make Religion appear in such a contrast with the common laws of nature and the common course of events, that the whole world would have been amazed, and given their assent. But this would have been moral force, which could not have produced moral conviction. As it is, the essentials of true religion were such upon every stage, that they could be seen and heard by every one that would see and hear without being charmed into an acknowledgment of its truth. It is owing to this admirable principle, upon which God dealt in the history of true Religion, that true Religion appears not unfrequently as natural in its course; whilst in reality it is the crown of all the ways and works of the Almighty. Like its author and finisher, it travels across the ages of the world in the "form of a servant," apparently serving all things, but in reality overruling all other events in the providential kingdom of the Almighty.

3. It is sacrilege to place revealed Religion on a par with spurious systems of belief. Christ will not be received amongst the deities which crowd the Roman or any other Pantheon, nor can his pure and undefiled Religion be enrolled in the catalogue of spurious creeds. The living God can have no fellowship with the deities that "have not made heaven and earth." The Religion of the Bible is not one out of many religions, but *the*

Religion in the exclusive sense of the term. We can only speak of the Hindoo or the Roman *Religion*, in that primitive sense of the term in which it was understood before it was adopted by the Church of Christ. And it was because the Christian Religion claimed from the commencement this exalted position, that it was considered "religio illicita" in the Roman empire, whilst all foreign rites and systems of belief were indulged and tolerated. It is the standard, at the same time, by which all spurious religions can alone be measured. False religions can only be delineated in the light of their divine original. Human works can only be estimated when contrasted with what God hath wrought. Human imaginations and human devices can only be measured by divine revelations.

As God could only have revealed and appointed this one Religion, so, on the other hand, there could be no occasion for a variety of religious systems. We admit, that certain speculative truths, abstracted from the Christian Religion, are or may be calculated to engage the European, whilst they fail to interest the Oriental mind. But it is very different with the historical facts of true Religion, which bear upon all human beings with the same force, without difference of colour, climate, or temperament. Again, if there was nothing which could give general peace, comfort, and satisfaction to man in the different parts of the globe, we should be led to the conclusion that human nature was not everywhere the same; that there was

not only a difference of races, but a difference in kind and species; a proposition which has never yet been put forth by any sober-minded person. But if the principles of human nature are the same in Greenland and in the South-sea Islands; if we observe the same moral wants on the shores of the Senegal and the Ganges, the Nile and the Mississippi, the Rhine and the Thames, there must needs be something provided by the God of nature, which will satisfy them all alike.

Man, therefore, never needed different religions; and if we speak of a plurality of religious systems, we can only speak of spurious systems of belief.

4. Yet notwithstanding all that may be said of the *spurious* and worthless nature of counterfeit systems of belief, we are ready to admit that there are striking analogies between genuine and spurious Religion. "Nulla falsa doctrina est, quæ non aliquid veri permisceat." This must be so, because, from the nature of the case, it cannot be otherwise. Spurious counterfeits, of whatever character, naturally preserve at all times a studied likeness and a striking resemblance to the original in all its parts and bearings. If we suppose that the contrary had been the case, how could we fancy that spurious Religion should ever have succeeded to gain the ascendancy which it has gained over genuine Religion among mankind? If it were otherwise, if there was no likeness between genuine and spurious Religion, how could the ancient apologists

of Christianity advance the very strong evidence in favour of true Religion which they have derived from spurious creeds around them? Unmixed falsehood can only be found with the devil, "who abode not in the truth, and in whom there is no truth at all, who when he speaketh a lie, speaketh of his own, who is a liar and the father of lies." But all spurious systems of belief consist of a mixture of isolated truths with the dark ingredients of falsehood and vanity. And how could it be otherwise, when we recollect that both genuine and spurious Religion start from the same point, under the same circumstances, amongst the same race of men? Mankind being at a loss where to fix themselves, how to recover their original position, and how to retrieve their once happy state, they naturally seek and feel after God in every form of Religion, be it true or false.

If we consider the inferior stages of true Religion, we observe its principal features to be those of promise and prophecy. Israel enjoyed the blessings of true Religion, but never to that degree which could fully satisfy the craving of their mind. They have a land of promise, but they seek a better country, that is, a heavenly. They have Moses and the prophets, but they wait for the time when God at last would speak by *his Son*. They have the glorious ministration of the law, but they desire to behold with an open face the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. God promises to his people:

"I will betroth thee unto me for ever, yea I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies; I will betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord." And from amongst his people echoes the anxious cry: "Oh! that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence!"

The manna by which this people was fed, the country which they inherited, the deliverance which had been achieved, the eminent glory to which they were exalted; all these and a thousand other things were only shadows of good things to come.

Now it cannot be denied that there is a strong feeling after God in spurious systems of belief. The Pagan world seeks after the unknown God, "who hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth; and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation, that they might seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him." (Acts xvii.) In watching the working of the Pagan mind in its strenuous efforts to seek the "living amongst the dead," is it not as if we did catch the accent of that beautiful prayer of one of the Christian saints: "Tu fecisti nos ad te, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te. Quies apud te est valde et vita imperturbabilis!" Paganism did "grope after God," according to the original; but further we cannot go,

and more we cannot say upon the subject. Paganism did not find him, because it sought amiss. It commenced with uncertainty, it proceeded, "groping" in darkness, and ended with confusion. Yet notwithstanding this melancholy feature in spurious Religion, it is natural that we should discover solitary truths in a disfigured and mutilated condition, which indicate a noble descent, and tell the tale of a very doleful and melancholy wreck. In true Religion, on the other hand, we discover not only solitary truths, but we have *the truth* itself in all its *original* purity and integrity. Whatever meagre remnants of truth are retained in spurious creeds, we have in their divine originality and plenitude in genuine Religion.

If at any time it may be said of genuine Religion, that, like the path of the just, it "shineth more and more until the perfect day," it will be upon being contrasted with the several caricatures of spurious systems of belief. Each system of spurious Religion will call forth in genuine Religion such a multiplicity of Divine excellences, as to create surprise, and command the admiration of every unprejudiced mind. Like a diamond, which, by each turn, emits fresh lustre and a fresh variety of hues and aspects, so peculiarly striking in that gem, so each turn of "the pearl of great price" is fraught with fresh glory, which comforts and rejoices the very heart, and transports the mind of the beholder; each monster of a mythology eliciting fresh and uncreated beauty in the Religion of Jesus. As

falsehood can only be known by the standard of truth, and spurious creeds by the divine original, so again the deformities and absurdities of falsehood cause us to notice more fully, and to prize more highly, the excellences and characteristic perfections of divine truth.

5. Falsehood being at all times the perversion of truth, we discover in the most grievous errors in Religion a perversion of the most vital truths of revelation; and it may not be without interest to specify a few instances in which the Pagan mind has given utterance to an undefined, but strong desire "to seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him."

No form of Religion has ever existed which did not endeavour to show that it had been preparatively introduced in long by-gone ages. All false creeds of apparently modern date, labour to satisfy the more advanced and higher wants of the present, and at the same time to be considered as belonging to the most ancient times. With no exception, the religious chronology of Pagan systems carries us back into the depths of a past eternity. They are invariably searching for a *historic* foundation, from a fear lest they proceed arbitrarily in matters of Religion; and they endeavour to fill up the deficiency, of which they are sensible, by means of poetry, mythology, and by a number of isolated pseudo-miraculous deeds. But even more than that—and this is remarkable—they are anxious to

have their respective systems established in the deepest recesses of past eternity. And is there no proof in this of the deeply-rooted suspicion in the human mind, in reference to such religious opinions as have spontaneously risen within man? is there no evidence of a desire to discover a deeper foundation than the unassisted efforts of the mind are able to afford within the limits of time? It is a loud testimony, that the moral constitution of man required at all times, and in all places, a divine revelation from beyond the narrow precincts of time; and this noble desire to build upon that "rock of ages," which is unaffected by the lapse of time, has found utterance in the absurd and fabulous chronologies of the leading systems of Pagan mythology.

Again, a most superficial acquaintance, more especially with eastern mythologies, will impress our minds with the fact, that there is invariably manifested a relish, not only for what is rare and extraordinary, but what exceeds all the bounds of truth, all probability, sound reason, and common sense. How often do mythological creeds act upon the strange maxim, "Credo, quia absurdum!" In so strange a delight in what is extravagant, wonderful, and marvellous, as it has been exemplified in Pagan systems, we have the perversion of one of the noblest principles of the human mind. The absence of the true object induces the powers of the human soul to shape unto itself mimic representations and spurious forms of what it

actually needs and follows after, if haply it might find it. These undefined and restless motions of the soul to repose upon the bosom of the great, the infinite, and the marvellous, though noble in themselves, have subsequently ministered abundantly to aggravate the amount of human folly and impiety to an almost unlimited extent.

Again, God instructed mankind originally in a manner which was best calculated to engage their interest, and to suit their infantine capacities. He appears to man as his father and friend; they see him with their eyes, and they hear him with their ears. This familiar intercourse is followed by revelations, through the instrumentality of nightly dreams and visions, as well as by angelic messengers; then follow revelations by the immediate inspiration of certain chosen vessels; and when God at sundry times and in divers manners had spoken in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, he at last spoke unto men by his Son. The Word was made flesh. Perfectly analogous to this divine mode of instruction, which was adapting itself to the gradual development of mankind, Paganism throughout proceeds on the same principle, in its spurious efforts to instruct the world, pursuing the same course, only in a material sense. As the original commenced with manifestations of the Deity, and ended with the incarnation of the blessed Godhead; so Paganism commenced with similar manifestations of the Godhead cultivating familiar inter-

course with the human race. This immediate and familiar converse of God with man was also here followed by a counterfeit inspiration, by spurious oracles, and similar workings of a pseudo-prophetical spirit: and in full accordance with the original, they also ended with incarnations of the Deity, in various forms and for various purposes. And this leads us to another instance, how the errors of spurious creeds are a perversion of sublime truths, which could not be revealed by flesh and blood. We know, upon divine authority, that the Pagan world, in seeking and feeling after truth, did not seek the "Divinity" in general, this being already known to them, "for God hath showed it unto them" (Rom. i. 19, 20); but they seek the "*Lord*," a term which in the New Testament invariably signifies our Lord Jesus Christ. (Acts xvii. 27, 28.) Spurious creeds do not seek the Godhead in general, but they do seek reconciliation to this unknown but dreaded Divinity. And is not the universal deification of heroes and men of renown the offspring of a significant aspiration after the God-man Jesus Christ our Lord, the Captain of our salvation, the King of his people, the Hero of heroes, and the Lord of lords? The worship of God in human form and human nature was the ever-restless effort of Pagan idolatry, however poor, cramped, and insipid may have been the forms in which they struggled to realize and to fix the great idea which was the object of their hopes and desires. Paganism was groping in the

dark after the "Lord" Jesus, as an approachable intercessor, and the truly incarnate Deity from on high; and in its fabled incarnations, it exemplified the outgoings and yearning of the human nature in its forlorn and deplorable condition in search after Him who is emphatically styled "the desire of all nations."

Again, notwithstanding all that can be urged against it, may we not go further, and find a caricature in almost every false creed of that most mysterious and sublime doctrine of Religion, viz. the blessed truth of the divine Trinity? If errors, when universal, may generally be traced to some perversion of truth, we might certainly expect to do so in this present case. We have doubtless a corruption of the doctrine of the Trinity, as dimly shadowed forth in primitive revelation, in the monstrous error of Polytheism; and it is at least possible, that this dogma, corruptly remembered, perhaps gave rise to that very error of Polytheism, which at length obliterated almost every trace of rational Religion. But we have besides in almost every Heathen Mythology a divine Triad, if not a Trinity; and in some cases, even a Monad in connexion with a divine Triad. Let it be said, that the eagerness of primitive Christianity to obtain for itself the patronage of philosophy, professed to find the doctrine of the Trinity in the writings of Plato; and that if they had happened to maintain instead, a duality or a quaternity of the Godhead, the same writings would have equally befriended them;—let it be

said, that the doctrine of the Trinity, in the Christian sense, was not only unknown to the Pagan world, but even to the Jews;—let it be said, that the dogma of the divine Trinity, as it appeared upon the highest and last stage of revealed Religion, was never given as an object of speculation, but of godliness and practical comfort: but all these and other sayings do not interfere with our present argument. Waving for the present the point, that it is the abstract metaphysical unity of the Deity, and not the doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity, which is against reason, let it suffice to remind the reader, that if it be what men *practically need*, then this amounts to nothing more than what we venture to presume, viz. that human nature also, in this present instance, has given utterance to wants in Pagan errors; wants which are deeply felt, because deeply engraven in its moral constitution. Indistinct and undefined as these anticipations must have been, and far beyond the power of human *reason*, they were yet keenly felt; and nature in her desperate efforts to "grope" after the holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, kept not silence of her wants.

6. Whatever the analogies between genuine and spurious Religion may be, they both agree in seeking and feeling after God. But whilst Mythology seeks in vain, true Religion reunites the creature to his God and Maker. The object of Religion is, that we might have fellowship with him, "fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." Christ is the way,

the truth, and the life, and no one cometh to the Father but through him. The Father also will love him, and they will come unto him and make their abode with man. The mystery of true Religion was proclaimed by our blessed Lord, when he declared: "At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him." Until this equilibrium had been gained in the history of true Religion, the soul of mankind had been seeking and feeling after God; it had been yearning and thirsting four thousand years "for God, for the living God." Man had been wandering through every place and every sphere of Creation; he had been searching every corner of his own mysterious nature, exclaiming as he wandered through perplexing mazes of clouds and darkness: "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" Psalm xlii. 1, 2.

The ultimate view of Religion is fellowship with God; and man from before the foundation of the world was set apart, as it were, to be the prime sacrament for the divine presence, and indwelling of the Most High. God Almighty in manifesting himself for this most gracious purpose, reveals himself, not what he is to himself, but what he was pleased to be

unto man. "Qualiter cognovi te? Cognovi te in te! Cognovi te, non sicut tibi es, sed certe sicut mihi es, et non sine te, sed in te, quia tu lux, quæ illuminasti me. Sicut enim tibi es, soli tibi cognitus es, sicut mihi es, secundum gratiam tuam et mihi cognitus es—cognovi, quoniam Deus meus es tu!" (Augustin.)

Yea even in the most sublime character, as God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, we have no actual description of the divine nature and essence; it is a revelation "via gratiæ," not "via eminentiæ." God Almighty revealed himself as the triune God, according to the testimony of Jesus, "that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us."

In the revelation of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, all things necessary to godliness and the consummation of true Religion have been unfolded. The election to the full enjoyment of the blessings of true Religion, emanates from the love of the Holy Father as from its prime cause; it was duly unfolded and organized by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; and it was finally rendered effectual by the quickening and sanctifying fellowship of the Holy Ghost. Religion, in the broad Scripture sense of the term, is, therefore, not only to be above us as the Father's will and pleasure; it is, farther, not only to be among us as a gracious institution and work of the blessed Son; but dwelling and working within us, as the powerful and blessed Communion of the Holy

Ghost. God, as Father, resolves upon our rescue before the foundation of the world; God the Son organizes the economy of redemption in the process of time; and God the Holy Ghost effectually applies and individualises this most gracious purpose for all ages; that the triune God might be above all, through all, and in all.

The covenant name of Jehovah in the Old Testament did hide within itself something awfully mysterious and unexplained; and it was from a feeling of reverential awe that the Jews never ventured to pronounce it. Likewise and if possible still more mysterious, is the covenant name of the triune God in the dispensation of the Gospel. The most gracious appellation of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost is fraught with some unutterable mystery. It is peculiar to the character of divine revelations, that they always point back to the Most Holy of the temple of truth, from which they emanate; which, however, is never fully disclosed.

So much is certain, that whenever Scripture speaks of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, it preserves always a unity without a sameness; a diversity and difference without a separation. The Father does not appear, but sends the Spirit and the Son, and in both he takes up his invisible abode. The Son is not the Father, but is in the Father, and the Father is in him. The Father never says that he is the Son; but, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;

hear ye him." And the Son adds, "Whosoever heareth me, heareth the Father." Thus we read that *God is Spirit*, and that *the Lord is the Spirit*, and that God was the Word; but never, the Father and the Son are the Spirit, although the Father and the Son are present in the Spirit. The Spirit is called the Spirit of the Father and the Son, proceeding from the Father, and sent by Christ. Again, not the *Son of God*, but *Jesus of Nazareth* is anointed with the Holy Ghost. In Father, Son, and Spirit, we have, therefore, neither a mere abstract divinity with accidental differences, nor a number of single deities; but one living, incomparable, and unspeakable God! To every inquiry regarding his nature he replies in the New Testament; "*I am that I am*," *in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.* Neither philosophical nor ecclesiastical definitions will fully unseal the mystery, nor settle the question. But the time will come, when our hearts shall be comforted, "being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ," (Col. ii. 2;) and when all shall be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of this ineffable mystery of godliness. The Scriptures repel every attempt that now can be made "to see Him as he is," as vain deceit. It behoves us rather to bow with our dull understandings in profound humility; to admire with

adoring gratitude that divine goodness which even in this mystery condescended to our low estate; and to remember that good old proverb: "Nescire velle, quæ magister maximus—docere non vult, erudita inscitia est!"

We may rejoice, indeed, over a Religion so full of life, and truth, and love, and peace, redeeming our whole existence, and exalting our whole being to a blessed communion with the "happy God." He is glorified, and man is redeemed. Jehovah originally announced himself, by word and deed, as the living God; in the end "the life is manifested;" and that which has been seen and heard and handled of the Word of Life is declared unto us, that we might truly have fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. In the beginning of the development of true Religion, we have the promise—"Blessing, I will bless thee;" and in the end, the Church of Christ responds, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who *hath blessed us* with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according

to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." Now we have within us the first-fruits of the Spirit, which is the earnest of our inheritance; but then we shall be satisfied, when we awake in his likeness, to see him as he is. *Fellowship, then, with the Father, through the Son, by the Holy Ghost,*—this be our definition of genuine Religion.

CHAPTER II.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

1. In tracing the development of true Religion, we enter upon a subject of the most comprehensive and important character. We have indeed none of the systems of philosophical speculation respecting divine things, in which theory upon theory have been doomed to exhaust the resources of human wisdom and ingenuity; but we have nevertheless a philosophy of the plan of salvation, a body of divine truth, and a "*form of sound words*," which we must hold fast, lest we separate what "God hath joined together." Dealing in fragments leads at all times to errors of a most grievous nature, even in Natural Science. The necessity of taking enlarged and comprehensive views in the sphere of Natural Philosophy, has been felt already by Pagan Philosophers. Hence the beautiful remark of Pliny, respecting this subject: "*Naturæ rerum vis atque majestas in omnibus momentis fide caret, si quis modo partes ejus, ac non totum complectatur animo.*"

But if this be true respecting "earthly things," how much more does it apply to the heavenly truths of revealed Religion!

With a view to illustrate the above remark, that Holy Scripture eschews philosophical speculations respecting divine things; we beg to allude only to one great fact, which lies at the very bottom of the history of revealed Religion. When the Bible first introduced the Deity, it was not as an abstract object of philosophical and metaphysical speculation; but he is introduced as God Almighty, as the Maker and Creator of all things visible and invisible. Revealed Religion, therefore, led man in a most direct and practical manner, from an unknown to a revealed, from a dead to a living, from every false and imaginary to the only true God; and in so doing it ministered a most effectual antidote against the vanity of a reprobate mind, which has been exhibited in all systems of spurious Religion.

Man was to grow up in the image of God in which he was created, and to expand his moral, intellectual, and spiritual capacities in the likeness of his Maker. As, however, his nature was finite and limited, he stood in need of special divine communication regarding the nature, the character, the attributes, and the will of the Almighty. Upon coming forth from the hand of his Maker, man was good, "very good;" there being no defect in his nature. He was, however, to advance to higher and higher perfection. He was

wise, but possessing no absolute measure of knowledge, his intellectual, as well as his moral capacities, were capable of being expanded. This contemplated growth in the divine likeness appears in a striking contrast with the condition of Him, of whom David says, "*Thou art the same.*"

There being, however, no possibility of spiritual growth without the exercise of spiritual powers; and there being no virtue without moral liberty to choose between good and evil; there being neither safety nor firmness in what is good, without a faithful dependence upon the guidance of a superior wisdom,—man was necessarily subjected to a state of probation. Being endowed with a god-like spirit, and raised far above the vegetable and animal spheres of life, man could not unfold the peculiarities of his superior nature by an unconscious and natural process. He could not grow and vegetate like one of the noble plants of Paradise, but he was rather to *resolve* to do that, which it was his high destiny to accomplish, and for which he had received the necessary strength. It was, however, in his power to abuse what was intended for the immediate advancement in his Maker's image. God manifested himself to man as the Creator, the Father, and the Lord of his whole existence. He breathed into his soul that indescribable something, that law written upon the hearts, that conscience bearing witness; and it was now part of the divine instruction and guidance, to aid this progress and

growth in what is good, by giving a distinct commandment. (Gen. ii. 16, 17.) The Lord God commanded man; but from the beginning, his commandments were not heavy. The liberal character of this very simple command, permits the full enjoyment of all things, with one exception only. This first and extremely simple distinction between good and evil was not only sufficient for the primitive state of man, but it would have sufficed for all ages, if our first parents had reposed confidence in the guide of their youth. But without necessity they fell. In the likeness of the first man all were tempted, and in his likeness all did fall; and thus was entailed upon the entire race, the fatal and deadly consequences of the melancholy catastrophe of that fall; out of one transgression arose a countless train of kindred transgressions, and out of one simple command a countless train of kindred commandments.

The moral liberty of man slumbers instinctively, as it were, in the human breast; and man is put into the position to act with consciousness and deliberation, only when the distinction between good and evil has been brought before his mind. This is indeed the great moment from which truly religious life can date its origin; but it is likewise the important crisis which determines the future relation of man to God above and the world around him, and which involves his future personal happiness or woe.

It was not the impossibility to sin (*non posse*

peccare,) in which the original holiness of man consisted. This moral impossibility to transgress was not to be the beginning, but the final object of his religious and spiritual development. Nor yet could it be said that the divine likeness of the first parents consisted merely in the possibility not to sin, (*posse non peccare*,) so that the primitive state of man would have been neither good nor bad. In this latter case, man would have sustained no actual loss by the fall; but he would only have failed to obtain what he ought to have obtained. The primitive state of man was rather a condition, in which he was positively endowed with every good and holy disposition, for the specific purpose of exemplifying these talents in the likeness and in the service of his God and Maker. This, however, was not to be effected by some unconscious process of Nature, but by a faithful cooperation on the part of man, and by a deliberate choice of what is good, and holy, and acceptable in the sight of God. By thus living conformably to the will of God, the original holiness of man would have become a self-elected attribute in his human nature; man would have acknowledged the original gift by an expression of gratitude to the gracious Donor. The possibility not to sin would eventually have transpired into a moral impossibility to transgress; and the tree of life in the midst of the garden would then only have been fulfilling its significant position.

Man in his state of innocence possessed all the

means and powers which could ensure his victory in the hour of temptation. He knew "what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." He had received a command which was just, and good, and holy. He was expressly warned of impending danger in the approaching trial. Man could and should resist the temptation; but he could likewise neglect the voice of God, and give heed to that of the tempter. He can determine to act against the express will of his Maker. God indeed foreknew the end of this probation; yet he must permit its taking place, to bring about the necessary crisis—a crisis the necessity of which was founded in the human nature. God can, however, permit it without yielding one iota of his eternal purpose, inasmuch as he had already provided the means and ways to restore his fallen creatures. (Ephes. i. 4). The Father of spirits was endeavouring to lead his offspring forward during the hour of probation to their great and endless *profit*, that they might be partakers of *his holiness by their own free choice;* but having no root, they fall away in the time of temptation. God had forbidden sin, and desired that the world should be very good. But when man wished to have it otherwise, God had already provided a remedy against it. The fall of man could not frustrate God's eternal purpose of love. Instead of stirring up the good gift of God, and instead of striving lawfully against the evil which was already existing, man would fall. God is not mocked, for

whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. God had sowed good seed into good ground; but while man slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

The purpose of God could not make it necessary that sin should enter the world, and death by sin, with a view to glorify his great name. This would indeed be equivalent to the maxim, "Let us continue in sin, that grace may abound." If we, however, assume the scriptural view of the case, that it was the destiny of man to grow up in the divine likeness to higher and higher perfection; that he was destined to be a fellow-helper in the exceeding great problem of creation, according to which a "whole family in heaven and earth" should be organized; and if we hold, on the other hand, that redemption was not merely a restitution of all things; we entertain no contradictory views. The intended growth in the divine image involved the necessity that they should advance to the liberty of the sons of God by way of obedience, and thus to know good and evil, as God knew good and evil. As, therefore, Adam did attain this knowledge of good and evil neither before nor by his fall, we come to the conclusion, that the redeemed child of God attains something through Christ, which was not attained nor possessed by the first man in his state of innocency.

2. Mankind were hitherto guided in their religious development by the *Word* of the living God. There was, as yet, no obstacle which obstructed their growth

in spiritual life, and in religious knowledge. But this mode of training the innocent children of God became inadequate after the catastrophe of the fall had placed them suddenly in a fearfully altered condition. How deplorable was *now* the situation of man! how still more deplorable would have been his condition if God had turned his face from man, when man was hiding his face from his Creator! Instead, however, of withdrawing his divine revelation from the scene of misery and confusion, it was made to assume a still more gracious character. God now promises to accomplish an everlasting deliverance in behalf of the tempted, and a final victory over the tempter. "Ye shall be like God," was the insinuation of the wily tempter. Satan spoke these words as the father of lies, but they were nevertheless prophetical of things to come. Man did fall; incident to the fall of man, was divine redemption. In the plan of redemption God was found in the likeness of man, in order that man should indeed once more *become like God.*

Man was undeceived at the time the fatal transgression was accomplished. He has no longer peace with God, with himself, or with the world around him. He flies from the presence of an offended God, and is pursued by deeds of vengeance on the part of "*the creature.*" Man brought Nature into the bondage of corruption, and under the curse of the Almighty, instead of propagating peace and blessing by ruling over the earth, and having dominion over it

in the likeness of his Maker. Nature had been abused; the earth, with all her elements, and with all her living creatures, had been witness of the treacherous character of the appointed vice-regent of the Almighty. Hence the groaning and travailing in pain together of the whole creation until now. The curse which fell upon the ground, audibly reproaches man at every turn of his life. Man was to dress, to cultivate, to keep, and to preserve the garden of Eden. He was to "*subdue*" the whole earth, the character of which was reflected in his own nature; for it will be remembered that *Adamah* signifies the earth, over which *Adam* was to exercise his gentle and beneficent rule. The beginning of Adam's blissful rule should be made where God had placed him, and it should gradually extend to the whole of this globe, which was destined to become a glorious paradise. The scene of his fatal deed had, however, become his enemy, an enemy with whom he has to struggle in the sweat of his face to maintain his very existence, until at length his terrestrial body is overwhelmed and swallowed up: for dust he is, and unto dust he shall return!

Yet, although warned by the fatal consequences of the original fall, which had given type and tone to every succeeding eruption of evil, few only were guided by the star of hope which had brightened on the horizon of a fallen world. Not only had man no longer peace with God above and the world around him, but sin, which had become "quick and powerful,

and sharper than a two-edged sword," was piercing even to the dividing asunder of one brother from another. The fallen generation was a house divided in itself, and split into two divisions. One part, with Cain, "went out from the presence of the Lord," to follow their own devices in another country; but the meek inherit the earth, and dwell in God's presence. This pious remnant formed themselves into a separate communion, the members of which were known by the appellation of the "sons of God," in contradistinction to the "children of men." The latter were the descendants of Cain; the former were the descendants of Seth, who "now began to call upon the name of Jehovah." Whilst the pious branch of the human family thus walked with God, the children of this world were rapidly sinking deeper and deeper into sensuality, ungodliness, oppression, and violence; there was no fear of God before their eyes. The laws of nature, too, were violated; and the springing up of the evil root of Polygamy at that early period, gives a loud and unequivocal testimony of how suddenly the alarming corruption had unstrung some of the strongest and most sacred ties of civil and social life.

The very marked separation of the two branches of the human family, was caused by a departure of the family of Cain from the living God. This separation had eventually served to diminish the danger which might have arisen from a possible amalgamation of

both families in the cause of true Religion. Yet some difficulty was to be anticipated at a more advanced stage of the history of mankind, in preserving so desirable a distinction between the two families. The time would naturally come when both would have so increased in number as to bring them into contact with each other. This seems to be the mind of Holy Scripture, when the intermixture of the "sons of God" with the "children of men" is brought into connexion with the period "when men began to multiply upon the face of the earth."

It was, however, not a mere local and fortuitous cause which brought about so unhappy an alliance between the two branches of the human family. There is another reason, which deserves to be mentioned, because it is one so perfectly analogous to that which became notorious, when sin and misery were first introduced into the world. As, namely, at the beginning the woman beguiled the man that he did eat, so now the daughters of Eve beguile the "sons of God" from the simplicity of the patriarchal faith; and by their bewitching charms, they became a snare unto the people of God.

The wall of partition, which had hitherto served as a barrier between the godly and the ungodly generation, had now been removed; and the mortal disease, with its very dreadful and alarming symptoms, acquired additional fuel. The poisonous root of bitterness gained fresh soil, in which it could luxuriate and bring forth

its deadly fruit. "The wickedness of man was great in the earth." Giants, in a physical sense, were the natural offspring of this ill-starred intermixture of hitherto distinct branches of the human family; and a mighty impulse was given to a fearfully rapid and gigantic growth of corruption and ungodliness. The impending catastrophe is announced with a marvellous simplicity, (Gen. vi. 6, 7); and the resolve of Jehovah to destroy his creation, can only be understood under the supposition, that "every imagination of the thoughts of the heart was only evil continually." All flesh upon the whole earth had become a mouldering carcass before Jehovah, and if his purpose regarding mankind was to stand, the degenerated race must inevitably perish from his presence, and a new order of things commence. One sound member only of the once pious family of Seth remained, and it was for the above purpose that "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord."

The justice of a holy God interposes, however, in a most significant manner. We have already alluded to the revenge of Nature, which has been deeply felt by man ever since the ground was cursed for his sake. The Judge of all the earth gives now, more especially, power to one element over the other, and to all the elements he gives power over a corrupted generation. The groaning and travailing of the creature had become so intense and painful under the tyranny of man, that all the elements of nature were convulsed,

and gave birth to a phenomenon in the history of our globe, which will ever stand single in its kind, as long as the world endureth! When God was about to cleanse the earth, and to destroy our whole species, with a few solitary exceptions, he would execute his judgment by the instrumentality of that particular element, which originally embodied the several germs for the organization of this our globe. (Gen. i. 2.) It was formed in the water, and by the water also it was to be dissolved. The generation which had prematurely waxen old, and become rotten, should be baptized by a flood of destruction. When the family of Noah, with the several species of living creatures, were safely lodged in the ark, the fountains of the deep were broken up, the windows of heaven were opened, and the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights!

3. The account of a universal flood, which drowned the ancient world, has been imperfectly preserved in the traditions of almost all the different tribes of the human family; but in none of them has the judicial character of this awful catastrophe so distinctly been acknowledged. In a religious point of view, it has imprinted an imperishable seal upon the antediluvian Religion, respecting the holiness of God, and the necessity of an unconditional subordination to the divine will on the part of man. It has been established for all ages, that rebellion against the Most High shall not escape his judicial visitation; and that

mankind is fast approaching to inevitable destruction when God and Religion are set at defiance. What a solemn reflection for the present generation!

A new feature which is apparent in the development of Religion upon the cessation of the flood, is the divine covenant with Noah. A new order of things begins. With it, the season of the "forbearance of God" commences. It was the substance of this covenant, that while the earth remained, the Father in heaven would make his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and send rain on the just and on the unjust. Seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease. Neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood: neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. God would not leave himself without witness, in that he did good; but whilst he suffered all nations to walk in their own ways, he was giving them rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness. (Gen. viii. ix., Matt. v., Acts xiv.) It is, indeed, very characteristic of the infinite goodness and long-suffering of God, that he, as it were, pledged himself to spare his people, to bear with sin, and to withhold his final judgment, until He should come, who would offer an all-sufficient sacrifice, which speaketh better things than the sweet-smelling sacrifice of Noah. A renovated earth has come forth from this baptism of water, (1 Pet. iii. 21,) and "*few, that is, eight souls*" who "*were saved by water*" shall replenish

the same. (1 Pet. iii. 19, 20, Gen. ix. 7.) The earth was replenished from Noah and his sons, as has been certified by the tables of genealogy which succeed the account of the flood. But this brings us to another most important and critical moment in the development of true Religion, and that is, the dispersion of the post-diluvian tribes over the face of the whole earth.

Hitherto the whole earth was of one language and of one speech; and their Religion, too, was one only. It is the same God who appears alternately under the names of Jehovah and Elohim, without distinction of attributes or character. The same precepts, instructions and promises are given to all, without respect of persons. In speaking of the two families of Seth and Cain, and in calling the one the pious, and the other the ungodly branch of the human family, we do not take it for granted, that they ever held different systems of Religion. The "sons of God" walked after the Spirit, being spiritually-minded; the children of men could not please God, because they were minding the things of the flesh, and walked after the flesh. The latter had neither a genuine nor yet a spurious system of religious belief.

It was the divine will and pleasure that the inhabitants of the new world should increase and multiply, and be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. Being still averse to what is good and holy, and opposed to the will of Jehovah, man had determined to prevent their being scattered, by the building

of a tower, "whose top might reach unto heaven;" but what was intended as a standard of union and strength, is made a monument of dispersion, inability and confusion. They are taken in their haughty scheme, as the bird in the snare of a fowler. God had promised unto *Shem*, to make him a name. These rebellious tribes now say, according to the original, "Let *us make us* a Shem—a name." What a contrast between the high resolve of these proud patriarchs of the families of the whole earth, and the promise of God made unto Abraham: "I will bless thee, and *make thy name great*, and thou shalt be a blessing!" (Gen. xii. 2.) And then what a difference in the end! His mercy is on them that fear him, throughout all generations. He showeth strength with his arm, and scattereth the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He putteth down the mighty from their exalted seat, which was to reach unto heaven, and he exalteth the humble and meek. These nations now go abroad as sheep having no shepherd. They are dismissed, but not for ever. They are left for a season to themselves, but not forsaken. They wander far from a heavenly Father's house as prodigal sons, but not without hope of returning once more to their real home. They separate at the foot of the tower, the pride of which should be, to reach unto heaven, until they meet again at the foot of the cross; for when Christ was to be exalted on that tree, he would draw all men unto himself; and the tongues which now have been

confounded, shall yet speak together the "wonderful works of God."

With this dispersion, the foundation was laid of distinct nations and people; of states and empires, as well as of new systems of belief. The period immediately following the flood was indeed characterised as a period of separation and division. In consequence of the mighty catastrophe of the flood, the surface of the earth was torn (Gen. x. 25). The human family, according to the tenth and eleventh chapters of Genesis, was divided into tribes, and nations, and kingdoms—into servants and lords. The globe seems to have been divided into climates and seasons. But the same process of separation commenced in matters of Religion. As little can we conceive the development of any offshoot from the general stock of the human race, without forming its own language, together with its national and social peculiarities, as we can fancy it without forming some system or other of spurious religious belief. That the fundamental notions of Religion at that period were carried abroad by the dispersing tribes, is evident from their reappearance in all ancient systems of Mythology. They were, indeed, mixed up with a variety of historical, geographical, and fabulous elements; yet they all have retained a sufficient amount of truth to recognise their general features. The stream of time would carry many things along with it in its downward course; others, again, it would deposit

and leave behind; and, again, others it would mould and fashion into different shapes. The spirit of man, in the process of time, would forget some things; others would be retained; and, again, others would be cast into a different mould. Scripture, as the only means by which religious traditions can be safely handed down from sire to son, did not yet exist at that early period.

We have already alluded to the fact, that the dispersion of the human race has given impulse to the respective formation of their national peculiarities. Now the influence of this circumstance upon the modification and reconstruction of the religious elements which then existed, must necessarily have been very great. The national character gives type and tone to the several civil, social, and moral phenomena in life. Hence every nation of Pagan antiquity has its own national, civil, and social institutions, as well as its own national Religion. The primitive elements of holy tradition were imperceptibly wrought up, and modelled agreeably to the national taste and the national wants; they lost their primitive purity and integrity, by being amalgamated with the national, physical, and ethnographical circumstances of the several nations.

Again, in glancing at the character of the most celebrated ancient nations, we observe that those which, from some cause or other, were cut off from all intercourse with other nations after the grand separation,

remained far behind in the cultivation of arts and sciences. The circumscribed nature of human faculties demands foreign aid, even in worldly matters. It is evident that a combination of human powers is able to accomplish more than can be expected from isolated exertions. It was upon this principle that the tower of Babel was founded. Now, in applying this principle to the development of true Religion after the dispersion of mankind, we observe that the facility to interchange or to rectify religious tenets was cut off. Each tribe, when left to itself, would naturally, sooner or later, reach a point in which the religious development would come to a stand still; or, what would be still more natural, they would be driven backward by the mighty current of natural depravity.

From what has now been said of the manifold dangers and difficulties to which the development of true Religion was liable amongst the dispersed tribes, it will appear, that only a continuance of divine revelation amongst them severally could possibly remove and overcome them. And the question now arises, Could divine revelation embrace the *whole human family*, with its dispersed tribes, under these altered circumstances?

4. The amalgamation of the two lines of the antediluvian race had greatly tended to accelerate that corruption, which hastened the most awful visitation of the divine justice which has ever been witnessed

since the world was made. The unity of the post-diluvian family of man was likewise abused, and very considerable was the impulse which was given to the process of a corruption, the germs of which had been translated from the old into the new world. It was the will and pleasure of Almighty God, that they should be scattered, and that in their dispersion they should severally unfold their national peculiarities, independently of each other. If this was the real destiny of man, divine revelation could no longer preserve its *Catholicity*, which it had maintained up to this very period. The family of Cain had not been excluded from divine revelation before the flood, but they excluded themselves. If it was the divine purpose that the nations should be dispersed, and if this dispersion necessarily implied that they should separately unfold their national character, revelation could, under these circumstances, no longer confine itself to the more general and leading ideas of religious truth. It would have been necessary to support the development, and to aid, likewise, the formation of the national peculiarities; for the human family was as yet far from being ripe for that era of Gospel liberty, in which Religion could mount into the more exalted sphere of the Spirit. It would have become necessary that revelation should assume that form which would have been most adapted to the circumstances, the wants, and the national interests of each particular nation. In short, if God further intended to reveal

himself to the dispersed nations, he would have revealed himself to each of them, to some extent at least, in a different form. He would have dealt with each of the several nations—if we may be allowed to express the idea—as he afterwards dealt with only one of them. He would have approached and guided each one of them in that circumstantial way, and in that peculiar manner in which he afterwards revealed himself to one of these nations only. But, what was possible with one single nation only, was impossible and inexpedient with all the dispersed tribes of mankind.

If we suppose the case, that divine revelation had preserved its catholic character after this dispersion of the human family, the fundamental dogmas of religious truth—the doctrine of the unity of the blessed Godhead, for instance—could not have been preserved without imminent danger. The Deity, in some sense at least, would have been obliged to become a national Godhead. Now, constituted as mankind was in those days, the consequence would have been, that we should have to do with as many national deities as there were nations to whom God had thus revealed himself. And this religious error would have been incorrigible, because founded by the instrumentality and upon the authority of divine revelation. On the other hand, the unity of the Godhead stood perfectly safe, if God revealed himself to one particular nation, be it even in a modified sense of the term, as a national Deity; provided this revealed Deity be the only true and

living God, who has assumed the character of a national God for a certain time, in order to manifest himself eventually as the God of all nations. As little could it interfere with the truth and authority of divine revelation, if all other nations were to create false deities in their own blindness; for the time was to come when they would return from their evil ways, and join themselves, not to a national godhead, but to the God and Saviour of the whole world. But even this catholic revelation, which should in the end again embrace the whole family of man, would have been rendered impossible by national revelations to the several tribes of the human family, and its authenticity would have been undermined.

Again, harmony and truth, connexion and unity, being some of the most essential characteristics of divine revelation, we cannot understand how they could have been preserved, if revelation had been split into a thousand national forms, if it had been adapting itself to the peculiarities, to the different stages of mental cultivation, and to the various interests of the several nations. Would not divine revelation, with its very minute character, have come into the predicament of teaching one thing to one nation, and of prescribing another to another nation? Or are there no weightier differences than that the Chinese, for instance, in opposition to our own views, have considered red to be the most suitable colour for mourning and lamentation? Are not the manners, and even the

moral principles, of different nations so utterly at variance with each other, that with one nation something may be considered laudable and beautiful, which is prohibited as indecent and abominable with others?

And by what means, may we ask, would it have been possible to reconcile the differences and contradictions in maxims of morality and doctrines of Religion? It could not have been by the different nations themselves; neither could it have been accomplished by fresh revelation, for how could revelation at last declare something to be erroneous which at a previous period had been established upon divine authority? It could not contradict itself in so striking a manner, and yet presume to have a claim upon the confidence of man. If, however, God in his wisdom would permit error to grow spontaneously out of the natural development of the dispersed nations, it was worthy of his goodness to interfere by some fresh manifestation of his redeeming love; and, under these circumstances, it was probable that mankind would acknowledge its own errors, and embrace with joy and gratitude what God would prepare for them.

As, therefore, God could not reveal himself to all nations in that peculiar way which the character of these nations and the nature of revelation demanded, "he suffered all nations to walk in their own ways," choosing one only to be the steward of his past, and the depositary of his future revelations. The whole history of true Religion is marked by the character of

its being holy. All the elements which refuse to submit to its salutary and sanctifying influence are separated and cut off.

Again, we have the earth replenished with men, but not with righteousness. They are foreigners to the knowledge of God, which is life eternal, and strangers as to his purpose of eternal love. It had been shown as early as the flood that man, though under the immediate guidance of divine mercy, was yet corrupt at the very core; that his moral depravity was such as to rush suddenly into a premature excess of evil; and that in order to avoid the necessity of a recurrence of a catastrophe similar to the flood, some new element was to be introduced, which, whilst it suffered for a season the existence of evil, would yet limit its growth, and finally ensure its being entirely subdued and eradicated. This new element was the separation of some particular nation, which should receive a constitution of divine appointment; a constitution which was calculated, by a temporary toleration of evil, to ensure the final triumph of good to such an extent as far to outweigh the amount of evil which had been incurred by its temporary toleration. In this modification of the plan of redemption measures were adopted to counteract effectually not only the gigantic growth of idolatry, and to prevent its becoming universal; but chiefly, also, to rear upon an immutable basis the happiness of all nations, for time and for eternity. The nations now to be separated

are not set apart for destruction, but they are spared for future purposes of divine mercy. Unable to bear the torch of revelation any further through the dark ages of antiquity, they were yet to partake in its blessings, when the fulness of time had come.

5. We are now come to the great turning-point, at which, for the first time, there exists genuine and spurious Religion. Paganism takes its rise amongst the separated and scattered tribes of the earth. The development of Religion amongst the Gentiles is spurious, and beyond the pale of divine revelation. On the other hand, a chosen generation becomes the depositary of special revelations, and the recipient of gracious providences; which have the religious and national development for its immediate, but one of a far more comprehensive character, for its more distant object. The history of this people is, therefore, the history of the religious development of mankind under the continual and immediate guidance of revelation. In spurious Religion we have a scene of struggle with a thousand difficulties; human nature struggling with its great weakness; human reason striving with its feeble powers. The liberty of man bending always to what is evil, the Gentile world was gradually sinking deeper and deeper into corruption, until they were sold under sin and unrighteousness. This could not indeed be the immediate purpose of a holy God, when he dismissed them to walk after their own ways. But, independent of the impossibility of revealing himself

to each particular nation, there was something infinitely just and wise in God's giving to human liberty and human reason full time and ample sphere to unfold their powers, even in spite of the danger, that they would rush into a thousand errors. And was it not, after all, impossible for them to escape the good hand of a gracious God, who could bring them back from their eccentric course of riotous living? And did not even they also produce *some* good features in cultivating arts and sciences, which found an appropriate place in a new order of things? And then, if the result of a lengthened experiment should happen to consist in a feeling of despondency respecting their own imaginary powers, would not even this tend to prepare them for the offer of divine help? Was it not probable that humanity would eventually call upon the living God, after it had called in vain upon a thousand false gods? Was it not likely that these nations should eventually desire the kingdom which cannot be moved, after having witnessed all states and empires crumble into dust, from which happiness and comfort were hoped in vain?

The dispersing nations, like the prodigal son, are dismissed with their inheritance from a father's house into an evil world. They carry abroad with them the recollections and hopes of primitive days, the law also being written in their hearts. And when once these prodigal sons had wasted all their substance with riotous living, it was to be hoped and expected

that they would recollect their paternal home, and that they would return, saying unto the Father,—"*Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.*" In the now opening development of spurious Religion, mankind is being prepared in a peculiar way for salvation; for Paganism, with all its mysteries of iniquity, with all its vanities of mind, and with all its infidelity and superstition, could indeed weary, but it could never comfort poor immortal souls. The people of God, comparatively speaking, remain far behind, in arts and sciences, if compared with some of the nations of antiquity. There is very little left to the efforts of human reason and human enterprise. Already their fathers have been taught that *faith* was the chief element and the leading feature of true Religion. But whilst they were behind in some of the worldly accomplishments, they were preserved from the religious confusion of Paganism, on the one hand, and from the gross barbarity of its devotees, on the other. God gave laws to this nation, which prescribed every one of its motions, without reducing them, however, to mere automatons. They were a prepared people amidst other people, and that not for their own sake, but for higher and more general purposes. They have a national constitution in order to preserve their independent existence among other nations; but all their institutions have a double character,—a national one, to meet the circumstances of

the present; and a universal one, respecting futurity. Hence everything given to this people was accompanied with a promise of what they have yet to expect. The present in its history is always pregnant with futurity; and the typical and prophetical character of this people is peculiar to its whole history.

6. It is a striking fact that the documents of Holy Scripture henceforth assume likewise a different character. After the above-mentioned separation of the nations, the history of true Religion is confined to one people only. In meandering down through the ages of the world, this history recognises the dispersed nations only as far as they are brought into contact with the chosen generation. They are not only separated one from the other, but they are henceforth separated also from the *special* providence, and excluded from that *particular* care which is to watch over Israel. It is touching to observe how the most ancient records of the Bible allow the Pagan nations to emigrate and settle in their new abodes; and how, after having done unto them, as it were, the last honour, by rehearsing the names and genealogies, the Holy History takes leave of them, and takes no further notice of their existence, except it be when peculiar judgments are pronounced against, or when gracious prophecies are uttered respecting them.

True Religion had been safely translated from the old into the new world. But here also it was soon

again endangered by the fearful degeneracy of the rising generation. The spiritual worship of the invisible Godhead became less and less congenial to the depraved mind of man. He wished to have something which might aid his religious devotion as a representative of the invisible Majesty of Heaven, and a wide door was opened to a foul superstition and a gross idolatry of every description. The evil threatened to become as general as before the flood. When, therefore, the kingdoms of the earth were forming, God also would take a mustard seed, from which should arise his eternal kingdom, which cannot be moved. As long as mankind existed in families, God had a people in the midst of these families to serve him. When mankind had grown into large nations, God also would choose for himself a peculiar nation, which should bear a *Protestant* character amongst other nations, and show forth the praises of him who had called them also from darkness to his marvellous light. God "*testified*" before mankind were dispersed, (Heb. xi. 2, 4, 5); but the primitive plan is now modified, and has assumed the character of a *calling*, (Heb. xi. 8; Gen. xv. 1, xvii. 1, xviii. 1). God *calls* one man out of many men; he chooses one country out of many countries, one nation out of many nations, in the general process of separation. God separated a small dry branch from the family of Shem for himself; he transplants this vine into a separate soil; he waters it with indefatigable patience,

and watches over it with infinite forbearance and long-suffering.

With the specific view, not only to preserve a single family from the snares of a prevailing Idolatry, but to effect by that means the spread of true Religion amongst all nations, God made one nation out of many the object of his especial care. As this people, however, was to be a peculiar people; as they were to be the representatives of the world at large; as they were in all points to be educated for a peculiar purpose; it could not be a nation which had been already full-grown and developed with all their national peculiarities. It was to be a nation, rather, which should be under God's special training from its very childhood, and grow up, as it were, under God's own eyes. Hence God calls a single man from Mesopotamia, the country where, from local causes, the sacred tradition of divine revelation must have been still vivid in the recollection of many; but the country, at the same time, which had already been inundated by a flood of Idolatry. Terah had already taken his son "Abram," and Lot, the son of Haran, on a previous occasion, and emigrated from Ur of the Chasdim, or the Chaldees. And if, according to an eminent scholar, "*Chasdim*," or "*Chaldees*," signifies "worshippers of idols," we can with safety conclude that the exodus of Terah's family from Ur of the Chaldees, was prompted already by the high motives to escape the contaminating influence of idolatry. But when Haran also

proved no better shelter against idolatry,—and we shall see on a later occasion, how it became a most notorious place of Pagan idolatry,—it was then high time that *Abraham* should go out altogether from his father's house and his native country, the land of Mesopotamia. *Abraham*, in order "that he might be the father of all them that believe," was first of all to become a man of faith. A very honourable preference and distinction had been conferred upon him, but it was one which demanded self-denial and a faithful reliance upon the divine guidance. The circumstance that he was childless, upon separating from his own kindred, and that he yet received the promise of a numerous posterity, at an advanced age, taught him very forcibly, that he was to expect nothing from nature, but everything from Jehovah. The superabundance of the blessing which he was to receive was founded upon physical impossibilities. The nation also, of which he is to be the patriarch, was to be brought under a most rigid discipline, and under the rod of a schoolmaster. Their high privilege involved the possibility of falling under judgments more severe and more lasting than those of any other nation could ever have been. The privilege to be God's own nation was a yoke upon the neck of this people, which would have been found insupportable by any other nation of antiquity.

Abraham obeys the call which directs him to go to a land which was probably less infested with the

general evil of idolatry; and with this quiet unobtrusive event, which seemed in no wise to interfere with the gigantic strides of spurious Religion, a most important step was taken towards the revival of pure and undefiled Religion, and with it the foundation was laid for a new series of divine revelations upon a most extensive scale. That there should be no mistake as to the cause and the motives which prompted the calling of *Abraham*, there was given a definite promise, that through Abraham's seed "*all nations*" should be blessed. Abraham, a servant and prince of Jehovah, a hero in faith and in prayer, reached the land, which should be the heritage of his posterity after him; and how well he understood the nature of his heavenly call, building altars to Jehovah wherever he went, and calling upon the name of the Lord! But although he had gained the esteem of some of the great people of the land, and obtained at length in his promised son a sure pledge of the fulfilment of the future spiritual blessing, the land itself could not yet be given unto him, because "the measure of the sins of the Canaanites was not yet full." There were indeed a Sodom and Gomorrah, but there was also as yet a royal priest of the true God to be found in the land in the person of Melchisedek.

Abraham was looking for a city which had foundations, and confessing that he was a *stranger* and *pilgrim* upon earth, he sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country. It was a remark-

able fact in the history of this great man of faith, that the first particle of land which he could consider as his own property in the land of promise, was a *burial-place* at *Hebron!* It was, however, by no means unimportant that the chosen country of the chosen people should thus early have been brought into connexion with their national history. It was of the utmost importance that the recollections of the very childhood of this people should thus be connected with that land, in which they should ultimately be prepared and fitted as the instruments by which the true God would manifest himself to the Gentiles. *There is nothing like home.* There are no associations so strong, no feelings so indelibly imprinted on our hearts, as those connected with the dearest scenes of our infancy, peopled as they are with the beloved parents and friends of our youth. Every path in the field, every corner of the house, every tree in the garden, every prospect of the scenery of nature around, will tell its tale and rehearse its story. In like manner the land of promise was now *consecrated* by the preliminary sojourn of the Patriarchs; and it gained for its future inhabitants a peculiar charm, which could not have been substituted by any other excellency of the country itself. And was it not involved in the divine plan, that also the national character of this people should be formed and developed?

When Abraham and Isaac had entered into the "better land," Jacob only was left in this country

with his numerous family. As in all probability the increasing idolatry of the Canaanites would have proved fatal to the interests of Religion and revelation, of which the Patriarchs had been the sole depositaries, they were now removed to Egypt. This country was indeed more full of idols already than the land of promise, yet the spell of the temptation, which had existed in Canaan, was broken in Egypt. Canaan might probably have led to a separation of the holy family, to a mixture with other tribes of that country; and the great object with Israel would have been defeated. Egypt, on the other hand, with the land of Goshen, offered an appropriate spot in which the family could grow into a large nation; and then it was even in Egypt that Israel was able to unfold with comparative safety, if not their theocratical, yet certainly their national peculiarity, the Egyptians being religiously forbidden to cultivate any intercourse whatever with a tribe of impure shepherds.

It was here under a severe oppression, that that portion of the divine promise which related to a numerous posterity was speedily accomplished; whilst the spiritual part relating to their destiny of eventually becoming a blessing to the world, was still involved in obscurity. Yet, although the family history of the Patriarchs intimated nothing which could lead to the idea that it was their destiny to become heralds to an idolatrous world, one thing was certain—the promise had gathered strength; a testimony had been given

in the land of Canaan; and in the land of Egypt a remarkable providence in the history of Abraham, and more particularly in that of Joseph, had attracted attention. And then there existed for once a family separate and holy, with the prospect of growing up into a mighty nation, through the instrumentality of which God had promised to bless all nations; and although there appeared nothing more for the present, there was sufficient to encourage the interest, the faith, and hope of the believing Israelite relating to those great things that were yet to come.

7. The Religion in which the peculiar nation was to be trained, and which they were called upon to exemplify, was the *redeeming* Religion. Their national education had for its avowed object the salvation of the world. It was therefore to be expected that in the history of this nation, God would glorify his great name as Redeemer by mighty deeds of deliverance; and that future spiritual salvation would be pledged and shadowed forth by occasionally administering temporal help of an extraordinary kind. The children of God's choice are now in bondage; they groan under the burden, and cry for help under the cruel hand of oppression. A very long time, too, had now elapsed without any fresh manifestation of God's special care and favour, to refresh and quicken the great hopes and promises which they had inherited from their fathers. The long silence of Jehovah was now to be at an end. The promise of a numerous

posterity had been rapidly fulfilling during this period; but they were sorely tried in the furnace of affliction. The state of things demanded an extraordinary deed, if they should not only be delivered from the oppressive hand of one of the great powers of the earth, but delivered in a manner which should mark them before the world as God's own people, in contradistinction to all other nations who seemed to be their own masters.

God was not ashamed to be called their God, and he therefore revealed himself as Jehovah, as the covenant God to a fallen race of man. "*Jehovah* ad manifestationem Dei per fœdus in Jesu Christo, uno verbo, ad vitam Dei spiritualem: *Elohim* ad manifestationem ejus per opera naturæ s. ad vitam Dei naturalem refertur. Quamvis enim naturalis vita in Deo simul sit spiritualis indivisim, tamen per nomina diversa innuitur manifestatio unius vitæ præalia. Deus est—omnium rerum, Elohim, omnium actionum Jehovah."

As *Elohim*, God is the creator, preserver, and the judge of all his creatures; as *Jehovah*, he is known only to his chosen people Israel. As *Elohim*, God is also the God of the Gentiles under the old dispensation, for all the divine manifestations by creation and by providence emanate from God Almighty. Jehovah is manifested to his peculiar people; the Pagan, being separate from that body, has no immediate part in the covenant God. The history of the Patriarchs commenced with Jehovah. He called Abraham to become

the father of a great nation, and a blessing to the whole world. *Inasmuch, however, as the working of Jehovah was intelligible to their mind only by faith, as they could not clearly discern the blessings which were reserved to their posterity, it could well be said that the name of Jehovah had not yet been made known unto the children of Israel before.* (Exod. vi. 3.)

The nation of the Hebrews was led forth by an "Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile." As it was, however, above the nature, the position, and the character of Israel at that period to produce a man of that extraordinary character, God had prepared Moses for his great work by one of those chains of providences in which he so frequently gains his object by means which seem the most unfavourable and the most unnatural of all that could be imagined. The divine deliverance was wrought at a period when Idolatry was the established Religion of the whole world. Every land was covered with the dark shadows of Pagan superstition. Even before the throne of the ruler of the land of Egypt, where Joseph made no secret of the true and living God as the God of his fathers, nothing more would be heard of the God of the Hebrews! But in the midst of all this utter darkness, God is announced to his people as the *unchangeable Jehovah*, who is always, and under all circumstances, the same. With unprecedented clearness and emphasis appears, therefore, even now the character of Jehovah in contradistinction to every false

God. The haughty and proud spirit of Egypt can only render the difference more prominent, more impressive, and more conspicuous. A heavy storm has been gathering over the celebrated idolaters of that land; the tempest of divine judgments, which fall heavily upon the country, teaches the Egyptians the falsity of their gods, and convinces them of the vanity of their own imaginary greatness in a most practical way; whilst the Israelites receive in every fresh peal a renewed pledge of a pending deliverance, such as was never before experienced by any other nation.

The chosen family had grown into a large nation; but they were far from having obtained an independent position as a nation amidst other nations of the ancient world. With the triumphant exodus, the Hebrews celebrated, as it were, their national birth. A flock of degraded slaves, forsaken apparently by every Deity, now starts forth from Egypt as a nation saved and delivered by the mightiest of all Gods. What deep impression this marvellous deliverance, and the destruction of the army of Egypt, had made upon the idolatrous nations around, especially the Canaanites, has been recorded in the pages of Sacred History. (Exod. xv. 15; Josh. ii. 9, 10.)

8. As the people of God were to be educated for a most extraordinary object, their training demanded the utmost care and attention to the minutest details of their religious, civil, and social life. God was, therefore, not only to reveal himself as their Redeemer,

and as the guide of his people, but also as their *Law-giver*. If the exodus was remarkable for being the transition from slavery and bondage to national independence and liberty, the giving of the law was the rite of consecration by which they were exalted above other nations. For thus saith the Lord: "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me *above* all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a *kingdom of priests*, and an *holy nation*," (Exod. xix. 5, 6.)

The family had grown into a nation, and the child had become a vigorous youth, who was to be brought under the schoolmaster of the law. The law of a holy God is now "added, because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made." Abraham was the friend of Jehovah; but this confiding intercourse with the heavenly parent was no longer adapted when the state of infancy had passed away. Israel was the son who was to be brought up in the father's house, and to the law written in the heart was added another law, with the injunction: "Do this, and thou shalt live." The prodigal son of Paganism is to be prepared for "the fulness of time" without this law, and at a distance from the father's house, although God never "left himself without witness."

The law was the schoolmaster, as the apostle significantly calls it, which was to prepare a people unto

the Lord. A spirit of docility and obedience was to be produced, and a feeling of dependence upon the great Jehovah was to be nourished during this age of minority. Considered in this light, the old dispensation was looked upon as a state of servitude, compared with the liberty of the Gospel dispensation. But in order to prepare "the Israel of God" for the liberty which was to come, it demanded not only a few scanty precepts, but a constitution which should embrace every affection of the human heart, and every relation in life. As no man was able fully to comprehend the tenour of a constitution which should embrace all ages—as no one could either anticipate futurity with its hidden store of events, or yet fully conceive the ultimate destiny of the chosen generation, God only could ordain and institute the whole of this Theocratical constitution. The minutest particular, together with its most prominent features, was of profound importance. Small as well as great things were made to bear upon the great ultimate object of the whole constitution. Hence, the private, civil, and religious character of this people was formed upon a divine model which was given in the wilderness.

In a religious point of view, the law given by Moses is single in its kind, inasmuch as it builds the whole political superstructure upon the sole foundation of the worship of the only true and living God; every species of idolatry, even if it have respect to the true God, being prohibited as an offence against the State.

Pure Monotheism receives the most ample development, and is enforced in the most solemn manner. It was the primitive Faith of mankind, it was the family Religion of the Patriarchs, and it is now made the ground and pillar of the national Religion of the Israel of God. This people was, therefore, bound to Jehovah by so many and likewise by so powerful ties, that idolatry was not merely a *moral* crime of the first magnitude, but, in a political point of view, it was the greatest crime that could be imagined;—it was felony, and treachery against the State and its Divine Sovereign; and by committing this act of high treason, the nation abandoned all claim to political independence and the possession of the land! If, therefore, Monotheism was established and confirmed in so impressive a manner, it is evident that the revelation of Jehovah as God and King of his people had been considerably enlarged and extended from what it was under the family of the Patriarchs. The constitution, in a religious, moral, and civil point of view, was calculated to make the nation the happiest upon earth. It was even, therefore, a demonstration at the same time, that there is in all ages an inseparable connexion between religious, moral, and civil prosperity. By a faithful adherence to this Theocratical constitution, Israel was to be, in reality and truth, the priestly tribe amidst the families of the earth.

The Theocratical character of the Israel of God was both of a politico-national, and of a catholic-religious

nature ;—one could not exist without the other. The politico-national part of the Theocratical constitution resulted from the national history and the high destiny of this people. As Jehovah was a Father to the Patriarchal family, he becomes a King to their numerous posterity. But the character of this people demanded, at the same time, that they should have no other king besides Jehovah. The Israel of God were not only destined to preserve the fundamental elements of true Religion from falling into oblivion, but they were the very nation in the heart of which it was to be further unfolded, under the immediate guidance of revelation. There could, therefore, be nothing destructive or unfavourable to this great plan in the civil and political constitution of this nation. As the laws of this people could neither emanate from the nation itself, nor yet from some wise legislator of this world, it was natural, at the same time, that the sole executive power should be in the hands of the Divine Sovereign. God was to be sole King over Israel. The unfavourable influence of political institutions upon the national Religion has been frequently witnessed even among Pagan nations. And when Israel demanded and obtained a king, in direct opposition to the leading principles of the Theocratical constitution, they were very soon led into Pagan idolatry.

The solemnities under which the law of the Theocratical constitution was introduced and administered, were calculated to impress the chosen people with

the goodness as well as the terrors of Jehovah. Blessing and curse, happiness and misfortune, reward and punishment, were attached to each one of the several commandments; and the promises and curses which were then uttered, embraced every description of benediction and woe, excepting only annihilation, to which it should never come. (Jer. xxi. 35—37; Deut. xxx. 1—5.)

9. The Israel of God was to be educated from the state of infancy—yea, from "the mother's womb." (Isa. xliv. 2.) Now, in imparting knowledge, of whatever kind, the faculties, the general character, the advancement, and knowledge of the person to be taught are generally taken into consideration, and the mode of instruction is adapted accordingly. God had called his son out of Egypt. The Patriarchal family had multiplied exceedingly in number, but as they had not grown into manhood as regards religious knowledge and spiritual life, provision was to be made for their infantine faculties to comprehend spiritual things. The plan of training evidently demanded a symbolical construction. Religious truths were to be conveyed by types and figures, which at once were calculated to engage the juvenile mind of the chosen nation, and which were fitted to convey spiritual knowledge. Antiquity in general, as the childhood of human existence, was fondly given to symbolical forms; whilst riper experience prefers dealing more freely with abstract notions and ideas.

It is peculiar to all systems of Religion to adopt certain forms, and to prescribe certain rites, to manifest their character. If there were systems of Religion which admitted no more than the naked form of the word as audible symbols and signs, they would still, in a measure, partake of a symbolical character. This typical and symbolical character being founded in the very nature of Religion, we must expect to find this peculiarity likewise in the history of the development of genuine Religion; and we must likewise expect that these symbolical rites would correspond to the degree of the religious knowledge of those for whom they are intended. Whilst we cannot, however, appreciate too highly the divine condescension in giving *symbolical* instruction, there is another view of the case which rendered the introduction of symbols and types not only desirable, but necessary to an eminent degree.

We have already seen that Israel was chosen with a view to preserve the remnants of pure Religion against the rapid spread of Pagan idolatry; but Pagan idolatry was at that early period of a purely *symbolical* character. Pagan systems of belief were strictly *symbolical* in the earlier stages of their development. The host of heaven above and the elements beneath were originally contemplated as the visible symbols of the invisible God. There was no Idolatry, properly so called; no Mythology, in the proper sense of the term; but a simple, comparatively pure symbolical

creed of the natural man, who had lost the spiritual Godhead. These religious symbols are the inventions of man; and although they were dealt with less severely than the more degraded forms of Pagan superstition, (Deut. iv. 19, 20,) yet they were nevertheless looked upon as spurious in themselves, and as repugnant to the invisible Majesty of heaven. Hence their spell was broken in the Patriarchal Religion; and though it was not thoroughly eradicated from the wider circles of the holy family, it was yet entirely suppressed in the patriarchs themselves.

The religious symbols in Pagan idolatry were naturally increased in number amongst the dispersed nations, placed, as they were, under the different geographical and physical influences of their new abodes. When these Pagan symbols had laid the foundation of Pagan idolatry, they invariably transpired by degrees into the more developed features of Pagan mythology: and it may be said, that *the less* developed, *the richer* Pagan systems are, in symbolical forms, and the poorer in the pseudo-historical elements of a spurious Mythology. On the other hand, the more developed and refined has been the form of Pagan systems, the fewer have been its symbols, and the richer have been the elements of spurious history, or of Mythology. It is remarkable, on the other hand, to observe a decrease of symbols, the further we go back in the development of true Religion; and the more developed the latter, the more abundant are the

elements, not of Mythology, but of true genuine religious history. The Pagan symbol transpires into Pagan Mythology; the symbol of true Religion becomes type; and every true type is adding to the ever growing fund of genuine history. The symbol and the type eventually give place to the substance, the shadow to the body, the image to reality. Whilst Pagan Mythology attempts in vain to quicken the mouldering carcass of Pagan symbolisation, the spirit of prophecy animates the whole body of genuine symbols and emblems; and it is a remarkable fact, that the greatest number of the personal types of Christ, in whom they all concentrate, as in the key-stone of the eternal temple of truth, fall into that period when the spirit of prophecy was not yet so richly poured out among the Israel of God; when, therefore, it was most needed, to give sufficient security of the future advent of the great Prototype that was to come.

From what has now been said of the natural process of the spurious symbol, against which the symbolical constitution of Israel was in a measure directed, we are enabled to appreciate the opportune introduction of the latter. The promise of life had indeed been concentrated by Abraham's choice, and received fresh support upon the Patriarchal stage; but it could not support itself for any length of time against the rapid progress and the very powerful charms of the spurious symbols which now abounded in every direction.

Pure and undefiled Religion had preserved its spiritual character in the bosom of the patriarchal family, but this could no longer be done when the family had grown into a large nation. Much less could the knowledge of Jehovah be communicated to other nations; an event which was directly anticipated by the letter and by the spirit of the divine promise. The law was added to aid the divine promise in supporting its influence against the inroads of a spurious symbol; but scarcely had the thunderings and lightnings ceased to terrify the trembling audience, when "they quickly turned aside out of the way which was commanded them, and made them a molten image." (Deut. ix. 12.)

In order, therefore, to give the necessary support to the law and to the promise, the latter was folded up in a complex apparatus of types and emblems, and embodied in a system of symbolical institutions. God in his goodness and wisdom arrested in due time the vehement desire of his fallen creatures to go a-whoring after a spurious symbol, by instituting the true symbols and the genuine types of good things to come. Promise had stood alone, unprotected, and exposed to a flood of erroneous symbols; but it was secured in due season, for the same reasons for which the sacred traditions were now safely deposited in the written form of Holy Scriptures.

The connexion of the sacred name of Jehovah with almost every single nail in the tabernacle, was cal-

culated to stamp the whole system of symbols with a strictly religious character. It was on this wise that the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ. We have nothing in the whole body of the Mosaical institutions which does not strictly partake of the symbolical character. If the spirit of life animates the heart, it will communicate itself to the very extremities of the body. Every single hieroglyphic figure in the constitution had its meaning. All historic characters, events, and circumstances, so studiously recorded, down to the very items of the drapery of the tabernacle and the ornaments of the temple, were divinely chosen symbols for conveying intimations of truths deeply interesting to the whole race of man. The character of the chosen people demanded a plan of divine education with some tangible form, without inducing a morbid taste for *empty* forms and ceremonies.

10. Much discussion having at various times arisen upon the subject, we shall offer a few remarks upon the rites of the Mosaic constitution and those of Pagan antiquity in general. We first notice the marked distinction between the external form and the thing signified. With reference to the *symbolical form*, we have already alluded to the fact, that it had been adopted in the development of true religion, partly on account of the general character of mankind at that primitive period, partly from considerations which had been suggested by the peculiar circumstances of the chosen generation. They were originally "like unto

other nations." Previous to the separation they formed part and parcel of the world at large. Their choice and separation were not a miraculous translation of the nation from one epoch of the world into another. They were not placed under circumstances of an age which was a thousand years in advance. It was indeed a thorough separation from an evil world, but yet not a momentary magical tearing off from all connexion with nature and the world around them. If the probation of our first parents, which involved so deadly a risk, could not be overleaped in the development of Religion, how could it at any later period be expected that any very essential and important stage should be miraculously overleaped and surmounted?

The beginning of the separation was the opening of a protracted course of divine education. But the people to be educated remained a people of their day, a branch of the human family, and as such they were subject to the general laws of the physical and spiritual development of the human race. To prescribe, therefore, to a nation at that period of the world, a religion in which the spiritual elements would have been exercising a preponderating influence over certain external forms, rites, and ceremonies, would have been to apply artificial means, as it were, to accelerate the growth of a plant; it would have been to apply moral force in order to produce a premature result,—a plan which would have defeated its own object. The circumstance, therefore, that true Religion partook of

the *symbolical character* of Pagan systems of belief, can never be urged as an objection against its original and divine character. It is, on the contrary, a criterion of its divine origin, and was naturally involved in the plan of Jehovah to bring up Israel as a people unto his great name. Symbolical forms constitute at all times a kind of language, the component parts of which have been derived from the various elements which exist in nature around us. This language of symbols was uttered by Almighty God when he created the universe. He wrote his power, and his wisdom, and his goodness, upon every leaf, upon every herb, and upon every particle of his glorious creation. God revealed himself by creation; he spoke, and his speech transpired into a thousand forms, and sounds which rendered nature vocal. "The heavens *declare* the glory of God, and the firmament *sheweth* his handy works." As, however, in language, properly so called, words are only the less material external forms of thoughts and ideas, so also in symbolical language.

It can be no objection against the documents of revelation, that they have been written in a language which has a singular affinity with several other languages; as little can the originality of true Religion be affected by its having certain symbolical features in common with spurious religious systems. As in language in general, so also in symbolical language, we have certain fundamental principles, which are

founded in nature. Thus it has, for instance, never been made a subject of inquiry whether black was a significant colour for purity and innocence. We meet, therefore, very naturally, with several coincidences in the religious symbols of Pagan antiquity, without the one having necessarily been borrowed from the other. If this be the case with reference to Pagan symbols in general, we reject as unfounded the very arbitrary notion, according to which part of the Mosaic constitution was borrowed from Pagan systems of belief.

Abraham was called out of his previous circumstances and connexions, with a view to separate him from all idolatry. Again, God called Israel out of Egypt, that they should be a *separate* people; and it would, therefore, indeed have been a strange method, perhaps worthy of an Egyptian deity, to confirm and strengthen this separation by adopting Egyptian rites and ceremonies. And yet with what confidence, with what boldness and plausibility has not this impertinent notion been set forth in latter days by some of the all-wise philosophers of this world! By receiving the elements of Egyptian Mythology and Symbolatry into revealed Religion, spurious Religion would have been sanctioned and perpetuated amongst God's people. But who can forget the scene of Egyptian Idolatry at the foot of Mount Sinai, and the terrific judgment which ensued upon so base, wilful and bold a departure from the pure worship of Jehovah! As regards that notorious assumption which has been

propagated in latter days, and according to which God's people had received a modified form of Egyptian idolatry, it has been shown, as in a thousand other instances, how the truth has been perverted, and how a frivolous disregard to both common sense and historical facts has been manifested, in order to deprive true Religion of its divine character, and to strip it of the power which it exercises over the conscience of man!

Nature, indeed, is by no means losing its symbolical character only because Paganism had misunderstood and abused the same, and lost sight of the Creator. And if we discover certain religious symbols in the Mosaic constitution which exist likewise amongst Pagans, we must bear in mind that it is not the symbol, but the thing signified, which is of the greatest importance. Again, if we assume the *fictitious* case, that Jehovah had borrowed any of the Pagan symbols with a view to teach Israel his son, whom he had called out of Egypt,—who will let it, or who will say aught against it? This would as little depreciate the divine character of the Jewish constitution, as it could weaken the covenant made with Noah after the flood were we to assume that the rainbow had previously existed, but was only then, and on that occasion, "given," or "appointed," according to the original, as a sign of his covenant with the survivers and their posterity; or as little would the circumstance of other nations having used circumcision deteriorate the validity of Hebrew circumcision;

or, to allude only to one more fact, as little would it affect the efficacy and nature of Christian baptism, that all Pagan systems of belief had, and still have, their religious ablutions.

Pagan symbols, in short, are arbitrarily chosen, whilst the symbols of true Religion are of divine appointment. The spurious symbols are empty and void; the genuine are replete with divine truth, and calculated to instruct man in the things pertaining to God and the kingdom of heaven. The one has reference to deified nature; the other to the mysteries of the living God. The one endeavours in some instances to retain some of the flying sparks of primitive revelation; the other points into futurity, and is a shadow of good things to come. The one appears as a disorganized mass, without head or tail; the other is a sound body of truth, which is animated by the spirit of prophecy, and preserved in a healthy frame by the vigour of that "schoolmaster," even the law, which preserved the Israelite from that "vanity of mind" which is peculiar to all systems of spurious Religion. And whilst Pagan symbols were either suddenly arrested by a state of stagnation, or superseded by a spurious Mythology; the genuine symbol, from its connexion with the whole body of divine revelations, was pressing forward to a period when all should behold, with open faces, the glory of the only-begotten Son, full of grace and truth.

If, finally, religious rites and symbols are strictly

expressive of religious truths and religious ideas, then naturally the Mosaic symbols are as little intended to express Pagan ideas, as Pagan symbols in their connexion with Paganism are calculated to express the ideas of revealed Religion. The pomegranates, the almonds, the flowers, and the blossoms, and even the numbers, have a moral and spiritual signification in true religion. The same objects in Pagan Religions are symbolical of purely physical ideas. Both genuine and spurious Religion have amongst their numerous symbols that of holy arks, which are indeed similar in some points, but they are yet expressive of very different ideas. The several holy arks amongst the ancient Pagans contained plants, salt, serpents, pyramids, pomegranates, Nile-water, and other objects indicative of the physical process of procreation. The holy ark of the tabernacle contained the testimony of Jehovah, the holy law of a holy God, the ratification of his covenant with a holy nation. As different, therefore, as the Phallus of Dionysus and the Decalogue of Moses—as different as the comb of Venus and the law of Jehovah, and as different as Nile-water, plants, and cakes, and serpents are from the words which proceeded from the mouth of God, and were written by his finger; so different are Pagan symbols in general from those of the Mosaic constitution! In the symbolical ark of the testimony are concentrated the fundamental truths of divine revelation, the chief glory of the people of God, the essence of a

spiritual and holy Religion. In the symbolical arks of the Egyptians, the Greeks, and the Romans, on the other hand, are concentrated the fundamental principles of Paganism, as the Religion of nature, with its great problem, the mystery of procreation!

11. The soul of all the types and symbols of the Mosaic constitution was the sacrifice and priesthood. Sacrifices, indeed, had existed long before the constitution was called into existence. They were instituted when guilt was contracted; and sacrifice was one of the few simple rites of the Patriarchs of old. It was, however, reserved to the Law which came by Moses, to define the sacrificial rites and to prescribe every detail in their performance. This had become the more necessary, as Paganism had also in this point sadly departed from the good old paths, and grossly perverted this very sacred rite. The very simple act of the Patriarchal sacrifice was now brought into a more detailed and complicated form. If sacrifices are considered as a mere ceremony, and looked upon as the result of superstitious notions respecting the character of the Deity, the modification of sacrifices under Moses will certainly appear as a relapse, rather than a progress in Religion. The sacrificial institutions, however, as they now appear, are eminently calculated to be a thorough schoolmaster to the nation, which was to be brought up for all-important purposes. Nor can it be said that the more simple things are at all times the most perfect.

Amongst all the various kinds of sacrifices, those connected with the oblation of blood were by far the most significant and important. "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." (Lev. xvii. 11.) In this remarkable passage, nothing is mentioned of the death of the animal, but the blood is made the essential part of the sacrifice. The laying on of hands, the slaughter, the skinning, and the parting of the sacrificed animal, could be done by others, but the sprinkling with blood was always the part of the priest. (Lev. i. iii. iv. vii. 2 Chron. xxix.) Was anything carried into the Most Holy, it was the blood only. (Lev. iv. vi. xvi. Heb. ix.) As the object of the shedding of blood, is mentioned the atonement of sin or the covering of guilt. Reconciliation is therefore the leading idea of the symbolical character of sacrificial rites. God has given blood upon the altar to make an atonement for their souls. The atonement therefore emanates from God, and has for its object the reconciliation of human souls. (Jer. xviii. Neh. iii. Psalm lxxxv. xxxii. lxxix. lxv. Deut. xxi.) The blood has this efficacy in the hand of Jehovah, but never in the hand of man. It is indeed the priest who officiates with blood in the sacrificial rites, but he officiates in the name of Jehovah, and appears sprinkling as the mediator between God and man. Hence none but the ordained priest was permitted to make an atone-

ment. Jehovah is never represented as having been atoned, and this is remarkable; but the atonement is always represented as having been accomplished by God upon man. Human transgression is said to be covered from before the face of Jehovah. (Jer. xviii. 23.) The original meaning of the word, to atone, being, to cover, to make invisible, to expiate, and to annihilate, it is altogether inapplicable to God, there being nothing to be blotted out in his holy character. The idea, therefore, of atoning God would involve blasphemy of a most awful character, inasmuch as it would necessarily imply that there was in his character something which needs to be covered, some dark spot which is to be expiated. On the contrary, Jehovah, as the Holy One of Israel, always covers and atones in man what is unholy, and He has given him, for that purpose, blood to make an atonement for his soul upon the altar.

The reason why, through blood, atonement can be made, is said to be because "the soul of the flesh is in the blood," to which is added in the end of verse 11, according to the original, "for the blood atones by the soul." It is because the life, or the soul, is in the blood, that the blood atones. Not the material component parts of the blood are said to have the efficacy of atonement, but they are atoning only because they are connected with the soul. If, therefore, the blood be the most essential part in the sacrifice, and if the blood be for an atonement only because it is the bearer of the soul, we come to the conclusion, that the soul is the

centre around which all is turning, towards which all is pointing, upon which all is made to bear. God promises to atone our souls by the blood, whose life and strength is the soul. The soul in the sacrificial blood, and the soul of the individual to be atoned for, are brought to bear one upon the other.

The soul of man is that part of human existence by which the body and the spirit are connected, and which in Scripture is considered as the birth-place of corruption. The object of sacrificial rites is, covering sin. Sin comes from lust: lust has its seat and origin in the soul (James i. 14, 15); and the soul is in the blood. Against the blood, therefore, as the seat of the soul, is directed the punishment. The wages of sin is death. As the soul of man is frequently identified with his own person, the offering up of the animal soul in the sacrificial blood upon the altar likewise intimated the offering up of the "soul" of man to the Deity. As the offering of the blood is the yielding up of animal life, so the whole soul of man was to be offered up and given unto God. By the death of man's sinful nature, the cause of our separation from God has been removed. Man is atoned, reconciled, and thus prepared to be received into communion with God. But this leads us to the sacramental character of the sacrificial rites.

The shedding of blood was the divinely instituted means to cover transgression, to atone for sin, and to sanctify man, by bringing him again into fellowship

with Jehovah. "I have given the blood to atone your souls." The cause of this efficacy is, therefore, not in man himself. Indeed, human blood was never used as a means of atonement among the Israel of God;—yea, to spill their own blood for any religious purpose was absolutely forbidden, as one of the evil ways of idolatrous nations. The person for whom the offering was made was not even permitted himself to assist in the actual sacrifice. This was always to be done by the ordained priest, who officiated in the name of Jehovah. The means by which atonement was to be made was something independent of man; man not having the principle of holiness within himself, it was to be something ordained by God, as the source of all true holiness and sanctification. In the appointment of the means of atonement, it was, however, necessary that it should be something analogous to man. It was to be something beside him, yet it could not be absolutely beyond all connexion with his nature. It was only by being in a measure homogeneous to himself that the means of atonement could carry within itself the virtue to heal, and to cover, and to reconcile his sinful nature. The divinely ordained means of atonement was, therefore, in nowise accidental and arbitrary. The means by which the soul of the sacrificer was to be atoned was again another soul; but as this soul was that of an animal, which, as such, stood in no particular connexion with man, it was inadequate to take away sin. (Heb. x. 4.) And here we must

remember, that this character of imperfection is peculiar to the religious development under the Old Testament. It pointed as a symbolical institution to something more perfect, and set forth by types and emblems what it was unable to accomplish. This character of imperfection cleaves to its sacrifices and to its sprinkling with blood. The animal blood effected an external sanctification "to the purifying of the flesh" (Heb. ix. 13); and the whole nation, indeed, to whom it was given, was an "Israel according to the flesh."

The true and perfect means of atonement and sanctification was the blood of Christ, to which all was pointing in the sacrificial rites. The pouring out of his blood was, "*eo ipso*," a giving of himself,—the yielding of his "*soul as a ransom for many;*" and it was of that infinite value, because he has offered his soul in his blood in connexion with the "eternal Spirit." (Heb. ix. 12—14.) The symbolical character of the sacrificial rites under the old dispensation was so precise, that even the Rabbinical Theology acknowledged that animal sacrifices should cease to be offered in the days of the Messiah.

Bloody sacrifices have existed in every system of spurious Religion; yea, it can well be said, that as yet no nation has been discovered which is without sacrifices and oblations. But if there be a marked difference between genuine and spurious symbols, it is also in this present particular. It is not the place to

enter upon detailed comparison between the genuine and the spurious rites in question; a few short hints may suffice upon the subject. The sacrifices of the Israel of God are given to cover sin, to atone for man; whilst spurious sacrifices invariably aim to atone the *anger* of the Deity, to appease his *wrath*, to satisfy a thirst for *revenge*. And how often do we meet with this Pagan idea amongst Christians regarding the atonement of Christ! *God reconciles the world unto himself* under symbolical forms already in the Old Testament; whilst in all Pagan sacrifices the atonement is made by man, and the deity is forced, by means of sacrifices, to accomplish, *nolens volens*, what is desired by the sacrificer! We have, in Pagan sacrifices, the idea of the death of the Godhead, from which the life of the world is to result: but this is a purely Pagan idea, and founded upon the supposition that the essence of the world and the essence of the deity are one and the same thing. The sacrificial blood of the Old Testament is never looked upon as divine, but only as the divinely appointed means of atonement; and that only in a symbolical sense, as it pointed to the true sacrifice, whose death is indeed the life of the world. But we have nothing here of the death of the Godhead, in the Pagan sense of the term:—"For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified." (John xvii. 19.)

The character of the Levitical *priesthood* was that in which they were to represent the holy nation and

the royal priesthood. The priestly character of the nation was concentrated, in the first place, in one of the twelve tribes; in this tribe it was conferred upon a certain family, and in this family it was brought together under one individual—the high priest of Jehovah. It was the office of the priesthood in general to impart knowledge to the people, and to mediate between them and Jehovah; whilst the Pagan priesthood, in accordance with the whole spirit of Paganism, is engaged in the study of the universe, in the contemplation of the firmament, and in the examination of the laws and mysteries of nature. The wisdom of the Egyptian priest initiates him into the mysteries of mathematics, music, astronomy, medicine, zoology, botany, and architecture. The priesthood of Israel is engaged with the law of Jehovah, with the covenant of God, and with such means and ways as he has ordained to sanctify his people. All is practically religious: hence, even the books which have been looked upon as embodying the Hebrew philosophy abound with words like these:—"The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy is understanding;"—"Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil, that is understanding." Whilst the Pagan priest was occupied with natural philosophy, the priests of Jehovah were engaged with the knowledge which is life eternal, that they might know the only true God, and the Messiah whom he had promised to send. The Pagan

priesthood assumed the character of secrecy—they would not communicate their knowledge to common people that were not initiated into the priestly craft; whilst in Israel the priesthood existed for the avowed purpose, that the knowledge of which they were the depositories should become general amongst all. The tribe of Levi was to be the medium through which the testimonies and the laws of Jehovah should be infused into the life-blood of the whole nation. Yet, as the sacrifice was a symbolical institution, so was also the priesthood of a strictly typical character. They all pointed to a time when they should cease. It was necessary that both should exist; but they were not sufficient for the wants of the nation. Much less could these temporary institutions communicate the promised blessing to other nations. How could it make good, for instance, the many lapses into idolatry, when the most solemn denunciations were uttered against them by the divine lawgiver? Yet it was necessary by the sacrificial rites of the priesthood to retain the remembrance of sin, and to ensure to the believing Israelite the future participation in the good things that were to come.

12. God had thus revealed his holiness, his goodness, and mercy in a more than ordinary degree. Jehovah had manifested his zeal for the glory of his great name. He had shown how he has means and ways to substantiate his claims to the supreme adoration of his creatures, both within and beyond the

sphere of his own peculiar people. It had been shown how the mysteries of the divine purpose of love were capable of a worthy symbolical representation, but that the Godhead himself could as little be represented by a living symbol as by any graven or molten image. God had revealed himself as the lawgiver and judge of all men, who insists upon the sanctity and immutability of his law being acknowledged, yet as being willing also to give "blood" unto his people, to make an atonement for their sins. The impression upon other nations, which were wholly given to idolatry, had apparently as yet been very insignificant. Yet it could in no wise be indifferent, that now in the midst of them had arisen a Godfearing *nation*, a Theocratical *State*, the ultimate destination of which was becoming more and more apparent. One nation was to be separated with a view to convert an idolatrous world; and out of a temporary separation an eternal union was to result upon the grandest scale, and upon the most solid foundation. Temporary separation of discordant elements, with a view of bringing about in the end a more beneficial harmony between them, is a measure of divine wisdom, of which traces appear not less in the moral and spiritual than in the physical world.

Again, the distinction between the succour of Jehovah and the fallacious support of the Heathen deities had become more and more apparent. Nor could the contrast between the immoral nature of demon worship and the service of the living God; between

spurious miracles and wonders of his mighty arm; between a civil constitution founded upon the solid basis of the worship of the one true God, and one built upon the adoration of false deities, escape the notice of the most superficial observer. And then was it not this constitution which rendered a universal sway of Paganism upon earth morally impossible, which without it would have been the unavoidable consequence? As long as this constitution of the Theocratical state of the Israel of God existed, no Pagan powers could succeed to establish idolatry upon earth to an unlimited extent, and to extinguish true Religion from among its inhabitants without exception.

If it was, however, the ultimate object of the divine constitution to transmit true Religion to the world at large, even the very *Geographical locality* of their future abode was to possess a singular combination of advantages. Salvation to the scattered nations of the earth was the great object of the Theocratical constitution. But the tree which should produce this fruit required a singular care, as it were, in a separate garden. It was therefore highly desirable that the garden should be carefully hedged in and closed, until the fruit should become sufficiently ripe, and the leaves of this tree might be for the healing of the nations. A country this people was to have upon a very fruitful hill, in which Jehovah might plant his vine, his choicest vine, and fence it round about with a wall of partition, in a physical sense, as he had fenced it already

by giving it a law and a constitution to distinguish it from other nations. Now, if we follow the Israel of God in their migrations, we observe how they are gradually led up step by step into the land of Canaan, which is hedged in from the South and from the East by the desert, from the North it is sheltered by the mountains, and from the West by an almost unapproachable shore, without one single good harbour which was calculated to attract the ships of foreign merchants.

There are two great points around which the promises given unto the Patriarchs seemed to revolve. The one was the *promised seed* of the woman, the other the possession of the *land of promise*. It was here, in this remarkable land, that the son promised unto Abraham was born. The history of the childhood of this nation was to transpire in this land, in order that the chosen generation might become attached to it, as to their real home and the home of their fathers. But as the people of Israel themselves had become the purchased possession of Jehovah, so he was likewise to instal his peculiar people in their new abode. This abode of the Israel of God, was, however, not only to shield and protect their peculiar character from foreign influence, but it was, on the other hand, to possess every facility to communicate the promised blessing easily in due time to the most important nations of the world. Israel is placed in the land of Canaan as in the "Most Holy" of all countries of the

earth. The land of promise formed the centre of the then known world, and round about, as in the court of the Gentiles, were encamped the most important and celebrated nations of the world. They were placed between Egypt and Arabia on the one hand, and between Syria, Chaldea and Assyria on the other, countries in which the first great kingdoms were founded, and from whence learning and wisdom was transplanted to the West. In the neighbourhood were Tyre and Sidon, two of the greatest emporiums of the world. Towards the West were the countries of Greece and Rome, in which the germs of future greatness were already deposited by the providence of the Almighty. For "*Thus saith the Lord God; This is Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries, that are round about her.*" (Ezek. v. 5.) And thus it was rendered possible, that in the last days it should come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord should be established in the top of the mountains, and that it should be exalted above the hills, that the people from every direction might flow unto it. As a lioness Israel lies down to nourish her whelps among young lions. They were not to acquire political greatness by conquest and alliance with other powers; but in all quietude they were to unfold their priestly character in a land, which, under the diligent hand of an industrious people, would flow with milk and honey. The blessings of this land were to be enjoyed by them and their

posterity provided they continued to hearken unto the voice of the Lord their God; (Deut. viii. 1, xxviii. 1—6;) but if they would not keep his commandments, the Lord God would stir up adversaries against them, and most disastrous and painful would be the consequences.

Yet it would seem as if Israel, in taking possession of this land, would carry woe and destruction abroad, rather than the blessing of peace and salvation, when they were commanded to destroy the tribes of the land of Canaan. Were there indeed nothing in the character of the constitution of this people which pointed to purposes which only futurity could unfold, some uninhabited place of abode could have been marked out for the occupation of the Israel of God. But some of the causes why the land of Canaan was fixed upon prior to the calling of Abraham have been already specified. If it was the destiny of the Israelites to be placed in direct opposition, locally as well as morally, to all idolatry; if they were to bear an unequivocal testimony to the world, of the living God, and his sovereign title as the proprietor and Lord of all the earth; if their entrance into the land of promise was to testify of the holiness, the truth, and the righteousness of the Judge of the whole earth, who will certainly do right; if it was their special calling not only to prevent idolatry from becoming universal, but also to assume a position and a place of abode, in which the worship of Jehovah could secure a permanent refuge; if the light of the Gentiles was to be placed upon such

a candlestick in the world, that it could be observed with ease and comfort from every quarter; if these and similar desiderata were necessarily implied in the plan of Jehovah, then certainly no country in the world was better calculated to suit such a variety of purpose than the land of promise, even the land of Canaan.

Canaan was originally inhabited by worshippers of the true God, which is evident from the beautiful character of Melchisedek, the king of peace, and the king of righteousness, the priest of the most high God, in whose similitude the Son of God abideth a priestly king continually after the power of an endless life. But notwithstanding a variety of high privileges, and warnings of the most appalling description, this country became eventually the scene of a most abominable idolatry. The Dead Sea was a standing memorial of the holiness and vengeance of the Judge of the whole earth; but it preached repentance in vain to an impenitent race. Finally, the measure of their sins was full, and where the carcase is, the eagles always gather together. In former days Jehovah punished part of the human family by fire and brimstone; now he called the sword of his people Israel to execute his judgments. And again we ask, Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? The Canaanites were ripe for a signal destruction. And it was not without signification that the Theocratical State should be founded directly upon the ruins of idolatrous king-

doms. It was a loud proclamation, far and wide, of how diametrically opposed this rising kingdom of God was to all idolatry and its vices; how Jehovah will utterly abolish a nation, not so much on account of idolatry itself, which should be winked at by the Lord of Heaven until the times of forbearance had expired, as on account of the excess of vice and moral depravity.

The inhabitants who were to be rooted out had just attained the utmost height of their impious career when Israel had reached the boundaries of the land to which they were entitled by divine promise as their own and Immanuel's land. Other nations had often been made the instruments in the hand of God to punish a people which had abused God's forbearing goodness, without being aware of what they were about; but Israel should know what it was doing, and learn from it how hateful and obnoxious it is to depart from the living God. The land had been given to the Amorites and others, not as their property, but they were to be faithful stewards, and use well the talent which was entrusted to their care. They were, however, unfaithful to their charge; and being destroyed, the land was given to others. Israel, in being put in possession of the vineyard, from which the stones had been gathered out, should remember this awful visitation to their profit. "And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship

them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. As the nations which *the Lord destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish;* because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the Lord your God." (Deut. viii. 19, 20.)

13. As regards the immediate effects of the Theocratical constitution, and its working amongst the chosen people in a chosen place, it may naturally be expected that their personal welfare and temporal happiness would greatly depend upon how far they had a mind to appreciate these exalted privileges. Their whole conduct bore witness to the truth, that they were a rebellious people. But all these eruptions of an evil heart were fully calculated upon prior to the organization of the plan, so as not to interfere materially with God's ultimate object. Yea, their most perverted conduct, with all its melancholy effects, was made subservient to the same. Education of a sinful humanity demanded that sin should be confessed and acknowledged, and that in some cases its curse should be felt. Sin could never be known in its fearful extent, if not developed in its sinfulness, and felt in its consequences. Hence God often permitted nations to gather strength in their impious career, with the sole view to cause them to languish under its bitter consequences, and thus to prepare them for salvation. Thus it was part of the dealings of Jehovah with his people to make them deeply feel their misery, and despair of their own wisdom and

strength, in order to convince them that their salvation standeth only in the Lord, and that help cometh only from above.

Some very material points had been gained in the external development of true Religion when Israel had settled in their new abode, yet the final object which the whole train of the leadings of Providence had in view was as yet far from being attained. Not even their temporal prosperity was sufficiently and permanently settled. Israel had indeed a land flowing with milk and honey, a Religion which contemplated the salvation of the universe, a constitution which was established and organized by Jehovah himself. But another generation had sprung up, which "knew not God, nor his works, which he has done unto his people Israel." (Judges ii. 10.) Instead of executing the judgment, which demanded a thorough extirpation of the Heathen tribes in the Land of Promise, they were satisfied with making them tributary. (Chap. i. 28.) Hence they "were to be thorns in their sides, and their gods snares unto them." (Chap. ii. 3.) Instead of fleeing from them, instead of avoiding to touch the unclean thing, "they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods." (Chap. iii. 6, 7.) It was under these circumstances that a foundation was laid for all the misery and woe with which the following centuries were replete. Their personal happiness was naturally dependent upon their maintaining the high religious

standing which they enjoyed upon taking possession of the land. The condition not being fulfilled, a long series of events was introduced, at the end of which they seemed as far from the contemplated end as they were before. For more than three hundred years we perceive a perpetual change of fortune and misfortune.

In order to soften our surprise at this apparent standing still of a work, the progressive nature and tendency of which had been already satisfactorily demonstrated during a succession of ages, we must again revive our recollection as to what is the true nature of the relation between the Israel of God and the Gentiles of the world. The position of Israel, and the object of their education, implied nothing which demanded an immediate and extraordinary progress upon their having taken possession of the Holy Land. If it had been the object to subdue several, or all the Pagan tribes of the earth, then we might have justly felt surprise at the backwardness of Israel to carry these religious wars of Jehovah beyond the boundary of Canaan. But this could not be contemplated in the process of the development of true Religion. The pure elements of the Theocratical constitution did not permit, much less could they demand, so extraordinary a mode of procedure. Nor could the conquest of the Land of Canaan gender such a notion, as if it had given tone and type to future proceedings upon a similar principle. It was not even permitted to

Israel to show animosities against the surrounding tribes, nor molest them in the possession of their country; for, as the proprietor of the whole earth, Jehovah had given it unto others for a possession. (Deut. ii. 9, 19.)

The religious constitution was besides unsuited to proselytize in a more peaceable manner from other nations. The garden which enclosed the tree of life could not yet be thrown open to the world at large. The priesthood was devoted to the national wants of the people; and instead of converting the nations, they themselves betrayed a perpetual tendency to Pagan idolatry. There was, on the contrary, every provision made to keep the Gentiles at a distance for a long time to come. All seemed calculated upon a prolonged duration and toleration of the evil of idolatry. Jehovah had taken a comparatively small country unto himself, which was sanctified and set apart as Immanuel's land; and it was as little in the divine plan to convert the Pagan tribes at once, as it could be to destroy them in a body. The times of the long-suffering and forbearance of God should expire without obstruction, until something should have ripened into maturity which could be infused into the veins of a dying world; until the blessing should appear which would fully indemnify the evil consequences which had resulted from a protracted toleration of idolatry. The economy of Israel was as yet satisfied to secure Israel as much as possible from participating in the

superstitious practices of the Gentiles around them. Spurious Religion, in its several forms, was an evil of the first magnitude; but it was one, the protracted toleration of which was looked upon as being far preferable to an immediate, and still more to a forcible suppression.

Although we perceive, therefore, no very decided progress during this troublous period in the history of revealed Religion, we may yet affirm, that the honour of Jehovah was more advanced during the same than it could otherwise have been had it been as calm and prosperous as it was agitated by alternate victory and defeat. The alternation of woe and prosperity was rapid and great, but always brought about in a manner which was calculated to maintain the dignity of true Religion, in contradistinction to a foul superstition. Yea, in this period the chosen nation was to show what it could do after having received blessings and privileges of so distinguished a character. And we have, in some of the more quiet periods, very pleasing pictures of Theocratical Religion. Can we forget the sweet and pleasing history of the book of Ruth, and the zeal which was called forth throughout the nation by the crime of the Benjamites? There was indeed, under all circumstances, and amidst all the vicissitudes of this stormy period, something existing which precluded the possibility of Paganism ever succeeding in extinguishing the lamp of truth or casting it from its exalted position; there was some-

thing which stood firm like a rock, and bid defiance to the proud waves of the troubled ocean of the Pagan world around the Israel of God. Never was there a period before that of the Judges which abounded with so many striking evidences, *that Jehovah is always the same*, yesterday, to-day, and for ever; that in the Old, as well as in the New Testament, he is the "*Amen, the faithful and true Witness*," whose words remain unaltered under the most altered circumstances; that no vicissitude of time, no aspect in man or in matter, could in any measure affect the sure basis of his everlasting covenant, or change an iota in the Theocratical constitution, or alter the position of Israel to the world at large; that, on the contrary, ever fresh seals are impressed upon the economy of revelation, under the most adverse of circumstances; and that, although grieved with this generation as a people that do err in their hearts, and that have not known his ways, he does yet make it appear more and more how unshakeable and immovable is the foundation upon which he in future ages intended to build the Church which should not be overthrown by the gates of hell.

14. Israel was at all times the depository of religious truth in the preparatory periods which revolved under the Old Testament; but from what has been already observed, the religious spirit which animated Moses, Joshua, Phinehas, and similar pillars of the ancient Church of God, had almost fled in the succeding period from the peculiar people. Indifference,

infirmity, and the very features of spiritual decay, are conspicuous in the character of the Israel of God. Under priests like Eli and his sons, the Theocratical constitution seemed to draw nigh to its dissolution; for wherever the Spirit, with its quickening powers, has fled from a body of men, or from a system of ritual forms, life becomes extinct.

The heroic deliverers who had stood up during the previous critical period were generally more distinguished by a spirit of military bravery than by spirituality of mind and purpose; and the nation, in spite of these repeated deliverances, seemed to sink lower and lower into ignorance and a state of lethargy and deadness. The chosen people threatened to relapse into the corruptions of that world; and the "salt of the earth" was in danger of losing its savour, unless something should appear, which was in every way sufficiently powerful to create new life, and restore energy and health to the powers and faculties, which now seemed utterly paralysed. In order to make "*the spices flow out*" from the past leadings and dealings of Jehovah; in order to rouse the torpid mass of the nation by warning and admonition; in order to infuse new life into the soul of the nation by the opening of more cheering prospects,—neither the transient enthusiasm of a Jewish conqueror, nor yet the oracle of the priestly breastplate was henceforth sufficient. It demanded something more fresh and stirring; something more quickening and spiritual; and something

which in every vicissitude would redeem the honour of Jehovah, confound his enemies, and inspire the nation with confidence and strength.

Such extraordinary aid was imparted in this time of need; for in this most critical moment the *Spirit of Prophecy* was again revived. A voice sounds again in the camp of the Israel of God, like that of Moses, and in Samuel the nation received a guide, a leader, and prince of Jehovah, such as had not been since the days of Moses. In this opportune revival of the Spirit of Prophecy the nation was supplied with a living commentary upon the dead letter of the law, and upon the complicated hieroglyphical forms of the ritual part of the constitution in general. The law which came by Moses was now to become *succus et sanguis*, and penetrate, under the quickening powers of the Spirit, the very marrow of the Theocratical nation. But the Spirit of Prophecy, as a good steward, brought forth both old and new things; the mouth of the Prophet illustrated not only with more precision the essence and scope of the antecedent revelations; it unfolded not only the prophetical sense which was folded up in a whole system of typical forms and symbolical figures, but it gave utterance to things and subjects which could neither be expressed by the law nor by the ritual constitution. Prophecy arose upon the basis of existing revelations, and delineated from hence the whole scope of Israel's choice peculiar to itself.

The Patriarchs were permitted to look into futurity, but it was Jehovah himself, and not a prophet, that prophesied of good things to come. Moses was a prophet, but the most remarkable of his prophecies was that in which he *prophesied prophecy*. (Deut. xviii. 15—18.) We do not deny that this prediction refers to Christ, in whom all prophecy is fulfilled, but we can see no reason why the "*goodly fellowship of the prophets*," of which he was the head, should be excluded. This our view is confirmed by the context, —previous, namely, to the prophecy, that God would raise up a prophet like himself, Moses had been speaking of the abominations of the nations of the Canaanites, that foster those false prophets who use divinations, are observers of times, enchanters, charmers, witches, consulters of familiar spirits, wizards, and necromancers. As they are to come soon into contact with these nations, Jehovah warns his people against these abominations, admonishes them to be perfect with the Lord their God; and immediately follows the prophecy respecting the prophet whom God would send. As, therefore, the spurious symbol was counteracted by the genuine symbol of true Religion, so are here the pseudo-prophetical modes of a spurious divination opposed by the revival of the spirit of genuine prophecy.

According to the sketch which was originally given to Israel in their Theocratical constitution, the royal authority was to be united to that of the priest;

and this royal priest, or high-priest, was at the same time to make known the counsel of Jehovah by the prophetical Urim and Thummim. (Numb. xxvii. 21.) Hence he was to unite not only the royal and priestly dignity, but also that of a prophet. The high-priest with his breastplate exercised the royal or the judicial, the priestly or the ecclesiastical, as well as the prophetical functions; and in this threefold character he was to be the visible representative of Jehovah. In consequence of this relation, by which kings and judges in Israel virtually acted as representatives of Jehovah, they were called gods. (Psalm lxxxii. 6.) That, however, this appellation was likewise applicable to the other two branches of the threefold office, and more especially to the prophetical, is evident from the application of the passage by our Saviour, when he added, "unto whom the word of God came." (John x. 35.) Hence also the words of the prophet Moses were literally true, when he declared, "The people come unto me to inquire of God." (Exod. xviii. 15.)

From what has now been said, it is, however, likewise apparent that, like many other points in the Theocratical constitution, the union of the threefold office has been carried into effect in a very partial manner. The high-priest never fully occupied this exalted and significant office, nor did he at any period exercise the functions of his threefold dignity to any great extent. As in many other instances, so also in

the present case, the sovereign will of Jehovah, although expressed as a testimony and as a statute of what ought to be done, was never actually carried out in practical life. But like every other shortcoming of Israel, the one now in question was attended with disadvantages of a very serious character. The threefold office was in a measure rendered necessary by the very idea of the Theocratical constitution. Its separation was naturally attended with a long train of melancholy effects with reference to the personal happiness of Israel. The nation had now recovered under the ministry of a man, who, by special calling, united in his person the function of judge, priest, and prophet. And, like Moses, this man was faithful in *all God's house*, and the threefold duties appertaining to it. New life was now introduced into the precepts delivered by Moses; the forms which were given by him were now infused, by the ministry of Samuel, with that spirit without which the best forms, including even those of divine appointment, can only lead to superstition. That superstition was already at work amongst Israel, is apparent from the superstitious veneration for the ark of the covenant which had been manifested. (1 Sam. iv. 3.) Before Samuel, "the word of the Lord was precious, there being no prophesy;" (1 Sam. iii. 1;) now appears Samuel standing as the head and father "over a company of prophets prophesying." (1 Sam. xix. 20) The nation seems to be born again; and in every

department of their spiritual and national existence a thorough revival was manifesting itself.

No sooner, however, had they reached an eminent degree of national greatness and worldly prosperity, than they were tempted to ask for a king, and thus to demand a separation of what God had joined together. No longer satisfied with the priestly representative of the Most High and his government, they demand a king, and the threefold dignity is split into three different branches. The political power mounted the throne, and assumed the reins of government "to judge them like all the nations," upon worldly principles; the priestly authority, which lost more and more of the prophetical Urim and Thummim, fell a prey to the newly rising power of the royal dignity; whilst the prophetical branch was to stem a torrent of national corruption, and oppose, on the other hand, a worldly royalty and a slumbering priesthood.

How opportune the introduction of the prophetical element was at the time as a separate office, after the other two branches were divided into two distinct offices, in order to watch over and counteract the influence of worldly power, was already fully shown under the first king of the Theocratical state. In David, indeed, we have again united the royal and the prophetical dignity, and thus in a measure the future spiritual union of the several offices under one spiritual head was dimly shadowed forth; for although he never partook in any of the priestly administrations,

he yet faithfully supported that dignity in those to whom it was particularly entrusted; and thus the elements of the royal, prophetical, and priestly functions were at all events acting in perfect harmony for a season.

The process of the alternate harmony and discord between the civil, priestly, and prophetical authorities continued for a period of about seven hundred years. The political power, because not included in the original plan of the Theocratical constitution as a separate branch, soon commenced to decline. The civil kingdom was rent and dissolved as a cumbersome appendage upon having shown forth what could not be effected upon the primitive plan. But the more the political confusion gathered strength and accelerated the approaching dissolution, the more bright and brighter still shone the divine light of prophecy. Whilst the national systems of Pagan antiquity were invariably the handmaids to the political governments, and served political purposes, we find in he hi story of Israel exactly the reverse. The political power is tolerated only for religious purposes, so as to show to the world that the civil branch is introduced and preserved only on account of the more essential religious branch of the constitution. When the civil power fell, Jeremiah stood upon the ruins of the sanctuary; Daniel watched near the Babylonian throne in behalf of his people, and Ezekiel guarded the scattered flock of the Almighty in the captivity on the

shores of Chaboras. The political power had died away, but it was outlived by the Spirit of Prophecy; and because the prophetical dignity was invulnerable by the civil power and civil influence, Israel could come forth from the furnace of national affliction with renewed vigour and health. Israel had no longer kings, but it had prophets; the ruined sanctuary was restored, and the prophetical word gave its last sound by pointing to the Lord, who was coming to his temple. It was silent at last, because separated not only from the other branches of the royal and priestly authority, but also because there was to be a temporary silence prior to God speaking at last through his Son.

Amongst all the different institutions, the prophetical office was that which had decidedly the most important influence upon the development of true Religion. But as the Theocratical constitution had a national and a universal character, so likewise the office of the prophetical dignity appears under a double aspect. According to the definition which has been put forth by the inspired documents themselves (Deut. xviii.), the Prophet was, in the first place, to guard Israel against idolatry and idolatrous practices; to teach the will of Jehovah; to utter things relating to futurity, and to watch in general over the strict observance of the law and its several precepts. And this was the national character, which had reference only to the Israel of God. The history

of this nation abounds with testimonies as to the faithful discharge of the prophetical functions in this respect. The Prophets watched with a conscientious assiduity over the actions of the kings and princes, no less than over those of the priests and the people; they attended most diligently to all the national wants of God's people, being "instant in season and out of season," to warn and to admonish, to encourage and to rebuke, to threaten and to comfort. Notwithstanding the unceasing efforts on the part of these servants of Jehovah, the nation with their leaders too often went "a-whoring after strange gods," transgressing God's holy commandments and neglecting his testimonies. And when the political position consequently assumed a more and more gloomy aspect, the prophetical visions seemed gradually to forsake the concerns of the *Hebrew nation*, and to dwell more immediately upon the salvation of the *world* at large. The horizon of their vision was becoming more and more enlarged, until at length it embraced the universal blessedness of all the nations upon earth. When it became more and more apparent that the Theocratical constitution had benefited the Israel of God comparatively so little, it was natural that the Spirit of Prophecy should rise upon the wings of inspiration, penetrate futurity, assume more and more a universally religious character, and enlarge with unprecedented precision and emphasis upon the universal spread of the kingdom of Jehovah. As in times past the

prophets had been zealous for the law, and for a strict adherence to the letter regarding the rites and ceremonies prescribed by the constitution, so they assumed gradually a broader and a still broader basis, upon which they laboured as forerunners to Him, who declared, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will build it again." As the final glorious consummation of their far-piercing visions could only be accomplished by the great Messiah of the world, who would unite in his own blessed person the threefold dignity of *King*, *Priest*, and *Prophet*, it was necessarily of him that "Moses and all the prophets prophesied."

15. The people of God had at length reached a height of prosperity and national greatness under David and his son which was unprecedented in the history of the nation. The spiritual character of the nation, also, had been comparatively encouraging and prosperous. As one of the fruits resulting from this striking prosperity, we mention the completion of a national temple at Jerusalem, to which a limited access was even granted to the Gentile nations. And in permitting the Gentiles to partake in a measure of the blessings of the worship of Jehovah, a decided step seems to be taken towards the ultimate scope of the whole constitution. This remarkable feature in the present state of things was, moreover, supported by the Spirit of Prophecy, which rose still higher, and went far beyond this elevation, when it spoke of the latter days,

in which true Religion should entirely throw off its national and typical character. There was a very high degree of national bliss, but, notwithstanding this unprecedented elevation, the national Religion had retained all its peculiarities, which were of an exclusive character as regards other nations. The access of the Gentiles to the services of Jehovah was only partial and of a limited nature. Again, neither Solomon nor the nation retained the high religious life which was then existing when the temple was consecrated for the worship and the services of Jehovah.

The plan of the Theocratical constitution was from the commencement calculated upon such startling relapses, when the final object seemed well-nigh attained. As the traveller, who finds his way across hill and dale, is yet progressing in his onward march, although the end of his journey, from the nature of his path, recedes from his view from time to time; so in every apparent relapse, we have yet a decided progress in the development of true Religion. It was evident from the whole aspect of things and circumstances, that something far more important was aimed at than could be obtained by the building of the temple as a house of prayer for all nations; and if any thing could impress upon the mind of the nation, that the desired blessing could not be expected from the power, the wisdom, or even the piety of the royal representative of Jehovah, it was the history of Solomon. With the commencement of his peaceful reign, the brightest prospects had opened to

the Hebrew nation; and they had all vanished before Solomon had finished his royal career.

The nation rapidly ripened for one of the very sorest judgments of Jehovah. Yet, to allow an idolatrous power to destroy Solomon's temple, and to overthrow David's house and David's throne, would have been against a distinct promise which had been given upon the possible event of Solomon's committing iniquity. (2 Sam. vii. 13, 14.) It was impossible for Israel to retain their national prosperity under circumstances which had been so entirely altered; the kingdom was weakened by being divided into a "*house of Israel*" and a "*house of Judah.*" The latter retained the capital and the temple, whilst the former fell into grievous idolatry. Yet the wisdom of Jehovah, which was greater than that of Solomon, could never be baffled by the depravity of man. The separation was permitted for deeper and more important purposes. The greatness and holiness of Jehovah were made manifest, and much resulted from this unhappy rupture which tended to advance the interests of pure and undefiled Religion, and to confound the working of a degrading superstition. But more especially it had been again shown, how full scope was given to the passions of men and their liability to temptation, and yet how no human error could make void the purposes of the Almighty. Even in this bold career of wickedness and corruption, God did not leave himself without witness amongst his erring children. Whilst Judah

enjoyed the ministry of Isaiah and Jeremiah, which did more to maintain the hope of the nation than a whole priesthood could effect, there was, on the other hand, the display of the fiery zeal of Elias and Elisha among the apostate branch of the house of Israel. Yet, notwithstanding all these efforts, idolatry was gaining ground, and corrupting the nation. The abominations of Baal were soon added to the image-worship of Bethel; and where the carcase was, there the eagles were gathering together.

Abraham was called from Mesopotamia by the Almighty, with a view to rear from his seed a people worthy of his great Name. The ten tribes are now separated from the "*Israel of God*," and sent back to that very land, because they have become unfit to belong any longer to that separate and holy nation. Whatever portion of the salt of the earth has lost its savour, is henceforth good for nothing: it was to be cast out, and trodden under foot of men. The Holy One of Israel, with his two-edged sword, makes an excision of that part of the body of his people which has become dead, putrid, and obnoxious to his eyes. They are driven into exile from God's own presence, to have their conversation amongst those very nations by whose sin they had provoked his holy anger. "*Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away:* and every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. *If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered:*

and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." (John xv.)

The house of Judah remained longer in the land, but this remnant also was to follow them into captivity. Whilst, however, Israel went to return no more, the house of Judah was to return, for sacred and important purposes, which were set forth with increasing precision and emphasis by the mouth of God's holy prophets. Isaiah especially spoke of a branch out of a dry ground; of a king, whose throne no idolatry could undermine; of a prophet without his equal, who would possess the Spirit without measure; of a priest, who was to sacrifice himself, and pass from death to life, from humiliation to glory. He spoke of a return to a wasted land, not as under Joshua, to achieve military exploits in the battles of the Lord, but to realize the blessing which was promised unto Abraham, and to his seed for ever.

We should, however, be much mistaken, were we to consider the captive nation already a goodly band of missionaries, to convert the tribes of the earth to the worship of Jehovah. It is indeed beyond question, that Abraham was originally called from those very regions; it is certain that all Pagan idolatry originated in that very land, and emanated from thence to overflow the habitable parts of the globe; and it is equally true, that it is at all times well to cure the bitterness of the waters at the head of the fountain. But the nation was neither qualified for this great work in their

present position, nor could their recent attachment to idolatry gender a hope that such was likely to be the case. Neither was their still existing national constitution as yet altered in favour of such a movement; nor did there as yet exist among them a bond of union, for the due cementing of the body of true worshippers that were to be gathered from among all nations.

Yet even this apparent breaking up of the chosen nation and their Theocratical constitution was made to promote the best interests of true Religion. Israel continues a separate people, and even in their seemingly hopeless condition there was now and then something to promote the good of the Church, and to enhance the glory of Jehovah in the eyes of the nations. And then, even this their unhappy condition had been marked out beforehand in the book of prophecy; nor was that Spirit of Prophecy departed from amongst them. With Ezekiel the sanctuary was translated, as it were, into the land of their captivity; and Jehovah now appears as bound neither to the temple of Jerusalem, nor to any other particular place. Amidst the keen sense of present affliction, prospects were opened of better things to come. This was likewise done by Daniel, whose singular position near the throne of the Babylonian monarchy qualified him, in an especial manner, to exhibit the striking contrast between Jehovah and the false deities of the land. Jehovah was named and glorified at that period in the very centre from which Pagan idolatry had originated. And

as the fall of the Assyrian empire had already borne testimony to the truth of the "*sure word of prophecy*," so the destruction of the Babylonian monarchy, and the immediate rise of the Medo-Persian empire, stamped fresh seals upon divine revelation; and the nation did well to take heed of the yet unfulfilled parts of divine prophecy, as of *a light that shineth in a dark place*, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise. As the Babylonian rulers had made a strong confession of the greatness of Jehovah, as having no equal, so a royal proclamation was likewise made in the Medo-Persian empire, in which Cyrus acknowledges the great God of the Hebrews as the God of heaven and earth, owns his throne to be the gift of Jehovah, and permits the Jews to return, and to rebuild the temple under the most auspicious circumstances.

And who can tell how much good seed was sown by this dispersion into the promising soil of the nations, which were being prepared, in divers manners, for the reception of the truth, as it was to appear in Jesus unto the whole world? The time had now come when Israel could be brought into contact with other nations, without the danger of being so easily swallowed up by the sin of idolatry. Their national character had now been formed, and it was not likely, for instance, that now they would so easily enter into matrimonial alliances with Pagans, as they did upon entering the Land of Promise; and then, the experience which they had gathered, during the period of a thousand years, as

to the truth of their holy Religion, must have had some weight with them. It is true they had come hither as exiles from their own land, on account of that capital crime, which was always to be punished with the loss of their fatherland, and of their liberty. But because they did even then smart under the evil consequences of the sin of idolatry, there was less danger that they should be now overwhelmed by the power of temptation. We hope, on some future occasion, to point out the vast and salutary influence which this exiled nation exercised upon the modification of Pagan idolatry in those countries, and we advert only to the one great fact, that if not Israel in general, yet certainly Judah was thoroughly cured of their inclination to idolatry.

As regards the rest of the world in those days, there had been several things which tended to prepare the nations for what was to be accomplished in the fulness of time. The kingdoms of this world had been striving for ages to obtain the supremacy one over the other; and the country of Immanuel, being placed in the centre of commerce and policy, was occasionally drawn into these political feuds of the contesting powers. When Israel, however, had forgotten its high calling, and mixed with the kingdoms of the earth more than was absolutely necessary to preserve their own independence, they were sure to be humbled. These powers were frequently commissioned to chastise the Israel of God; but whenever they happened to touch this

people without a cause, or polluted the sanctuary of God, they invariably crumbled into dust. As, already, in ancient days, the curse of destruction, which was to fall upon Israel, did return upon Egypt, upon Amalek, upon Moab, and upon Ammon; so, also, in after ages it was true respecting the Assyrians, the Chaldeans, the Persians, and the Romans. "*Whosoever shall fall upon this stone shall be broken.*" If we have, therefore, no direct efforts manifested on the part of the captive people of Israel, to propagate the worship of the true God among these nations, for which event neither Israel nor yet the world was sufficiently ripe, we have yet a very decided progress towards that blessed end.

16. Upon having obtained the royal permission of Cyrus, who is styled the Lord's Anointed (Isaiah xlv.), the house of Judah returned, or, at least, so many of that house as were required to form again a civil state and a religious body. Their condition, however, was not such as to permit of the fulfilment of the promise given unto Abraham, and which involved a blessing to all nations. They were the remnant of a sifted nation, and in every point of view their circumstances were of a very trying description. They rebuilt the temple of Jehovah at Jerusalem; but not only was this sacred building far inferior to the former house of prayer, regarding its external beauty and greatness, but even the most essential glory, the ark of the covenant, and the visible token of God's

presence, had departed from between the Cherubims. As regards the house of David, there was remaining a very faint and insignificant shadow, and after Zerubbabel, it sank back into entire obscurity. Neither the law nor the priesthood could support the deeply humbled remnant of God's peculiar people. But in this remnant were yet preserved a living hope, and prospects of a brighter nature; and this smoking flax was once more rekindled by the Spirit of Prophecy. The prophet Daniel specifies the very year when the "Lord" should come and redeem his people Israel.

But even the most spiritual and animating element, which had been enjoyed by the chosen people since the days of Samuel,—which, even in the most trying period of national distress, broke forth in a torrent of consolatory language, saying: "*Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God, speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem,*"—the element, moreover, which survived the exile, and was a comfort till after the restoration of the temple, was eventually withdrawn. The Spirit of Prophecy departed. We enter upon a period of dead silence. We observed, in the history of true Religion, several intervals of a similar nature, in which the nation of God's choice was, as it were, left to themselves. They were in Egypt for about four hundred years, without a single voice being heard which brought words of comfort or encouragement from the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. After they

had taken possession of the promised land, they were again in a state of comparative desolation, as to immediate revelations from Jehovah, for more than three hundred years. And now we enter again upon a similar silence for four hundred years. How truly the kingdom of God is like unto a man travelling into a far country, who called his servants, and delivered unto them his goods; to every man according to his several ability, that they might trade with the same, and gain other talents besides them! Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man planting a vineyard, letting it out to husbandmen, and going into a far country. When God has administered a fresh capital of revelations of grace and truth, he withdraws from the visible scene of action. Instructive revelation, from its practical nature, has ever been followed by instructive silence. Every thing in divine revelation has its season. The ancient church of God had now been brought to a state of manhood. It had been nourished up from its earliest infancy, and passed through the several stages from the childhood of its existence to the age of maturity. It was now again to be seen to what good account they would bring the experience of former days, and how they would profit by "Moses and the prophets" during this approaching period of silence.

It is, however, highly remarkable how this silence of the voice of prophecy falls into the very same period in which the house of David sank back into obscurity.

We have observed on a former occasion, that the royal and the prophetical office, as separate branches and as distinct dignities in the Theocratical constitution, had commenced at one and the same time; and we now shall offer a few more remarks upon the close connexion between them, and the internal bearing of one upon the other. We recollect that it was in the primitive plan to unite the three functions of prophet, king, and priest in one person; and when severed by men, to make them so agree with each other as to constitute in tendency and spirit but one and the same government. This harmony could never perfectly be preserved, not even under the better princes of the house of David. The inestimable blessing of the prophetical influence became, however, more conspicuous when the more impious rulers of Israel attempted to render their government altogether independent of the invisible head of the Theocratical constitution. The worldly rulers may have been supported by the priesthood themselves; but the prophet was opposed to both the royal and the priestly dignity, in order to redeem the honour and glory of Jehovah. When, therefore, the house of David had fallen into oblivion, the guardianship of the prophetical office was no longer required. As regards the regal power of a worldly government which had crept into the Theocratical constitution, the prophetical dignity had accomplished its work and was required no longer, when the last prince of the house of David, Zerubbabel,

who had walked in the ways of his father David, had resigned his crown and his throne, and was marked by Jehovah in a manner which significantly pointed into that futurity which hid in its bosom a new order of things. (Hagg. ii.) The kingdom of Israel was to appear in a new form, after the Lord of Hosts had shaken the heaven and the earth.

But Prophecy had also fulfilled its important office in the Theocratical constitution, having given such detailed information regarding the spiritual head who was to unite the human and the divine government, that no one familiar with the nature and spirit of prophecy could be mistaken on his appearance. As the royal house of David appeared once more in its truly characteristic greatness before the setting sun, which was, however, to rise again, (Amos ix. 11,) so, on the other hand, the priestly office resumed a more primitive aspect in the high priest Jehoshuah, the contemporary of Zerubbabel, and reflected its lost glory, with a view to its revival in that exalted person in whom all that is high and glorious should be for ever united. (Zach. vi. 13.) The house of David fell into obscurity, and the Spirit of Prophecy fled; and in its flight nothing more is said of a "house of David," but the character of the Messiah is distinctly marked, as the "ruler desired," who would "come to his temple." He is signified as a purifier of the nation, who would separate the genuine gold from the dross, and be introduced by a man of the

spirit of Elias, in order to awaken the mind of the fathers, the Patriarchs, in their posterity. (Mal. iii. 1—4; iv. 5, 6.)

17. With the silence of the voice of prophecy, and the total disappearance of the house of David, the Theocratical constitution also seemed to break up and to disappear. The nation still existed, but, excepting the house of Judah, they were scattered abroad upon the face of the earth. The ancient city of the great king was built again, but it stood without the royal representative of Jehovah. The Temple also was reconstructed on the mountain of his holiness, but it stood without the mysterious ark of the covenant, and without the cloudy pillar which once bespoke the visible presence of Jehovah. The priesthood and the sacrificial rites were again restored in their outward form, but life seemed extinct. The nation seemed forsaken and left to itself. They had indeed "Moses and the prophets;" and this was sufficient to preserve them from relapses into idolatry, and to shine in a dark place, as the star of hope, which was able to guide the true Israelite in safety through this gloomy period. Whilst the Greek in his wisdom searched for an ideal of perfection and bliss in the golden age which had passed by, the pious Hebrew by faith looked into futurity, and a thought of the coming Redeemer was sufficient to dispel the darkest night of tribulation and national distress.

The time of blossoms had indeed passed away; the

sweet flowers which adorned this plant of Jehovah in a world "without form and void" had all fallen into decay. But, nevertheless, the tree of life was yet existing, and although all seemed hopeless, salvation was yet to come from the Jews. There are, indeed, blossoms in the moral as well as in the vegetable world, which yield no fruit, but are satisfied to diffuse for a season a delicious scent, and to give pleasure to the eye. Not so was the Israel of God, which was to become a blessing to all nations. The chosen people were not created to be a mere ornament amidst the nations of antiquity; it was not their destiny to relieve the eye of the religious philosopher, as it wandered through space and time in search of some green cheering spot in the vast wilderness of moral and religious life. The condition of the world demanded something more material; it demanded all manner of spiritual fruit, and leaves which were for the healing of the nations. Israel was indeed to flourish, but the time of blossoms was only to be a stage of transition; it was not for ever to bear blossoms. The period between the silence of prophecy and the advent of the Messiah, was that in which the blossoms had fallen off, and the fruit had not yet come to appearance. Nor would the Son of man have pronounced his withering curse upon the Jewish fig-tree during this present period.

All that the religious and moral condition of the world demanded was long ago prepared and deposited within the Theocratical constitution of the pecu-

liar people of God. The great scheme to satisfy the religious wants of mankind had been fostered and nourished for ages within the narrow sphere of this royal priesthood. Suddenly indeed the mighty apparatus seemed to have come to a stand still, and all seemed to die away. But this was exactly what the nature of the constitution demanded. The new event should not immediately follow upon the apparent standing still of the preparatory machinery, because the peculiarity of what was to come did not admit of so sudden a change in the complexion of things. The former things should indeed be remembered, inasmuch as without them those things that were to come could not be understood; yet the past should no longer absorb the entire attention of the true Israel of God. Not a return to the old national glory was to be desired, but they were to press forward to something comparatively far greater, even to something entirely new, which eye had not seen and ear had not heard, and which had not entered into the heart of man. The law and the prophets prophesied of Christ; both were to be held fast during this solemn period, and Christ was to be expected. The people of God were left to themselves, and the voice of prophecy was silent upon having made the solemn proclamation, that the name of Jehovah should be great among *the Gentiles, from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, and in every place incense shall be offered unto his great name, and a pure offering,* in contra-

distinction to the desecration and the profanation which it received from the people of the covenant. (Mal. i. 11, 6; ii. 10.) The approaching advent of the messenger of the covenant is solemnly announced as resembling the refiner's fire and the fuller's soap; he himself was to sit over the very remnant of the house of Judah, as a refiner and purifier of silver, who should purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they might offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. (Mal. iii. 1—3.) And the very last words of the Old Testament announced the coming of the day of the Lord as a day which should burn up the stubble, leaving neither root nor branch of the reprobate part of his people; whilst unto those that feared his name should arise the sun of righteousness, with healing in his wings. The law of Moses, with its statutes and judgments, was to be remembered whilst the coming of the *Lord* should be expected, who would turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest he come and smite the land with a curse. (Mal. iv.)

The necessity of holding fast the remnants of the Theocratical constitution became soon apparent in the history of this intervening period. The bold attempt of Antiochus Epiphanes to dissolve the religious form of a hated constitution, and to substitute the abominations of Pagan idolatry, very soon convinced the nation of the imperative necessity to watch over the

very form of the Theocratical machinery, until the "*Lord come to his temple.*" The persecution was severe; and it no doubt greatly tended at this advanced period to purify the nation, to separate the chaff from the wheat, and to sharpen the desire for a pending deliverance, under the keen sense of the misery and the distress which lay heavily upon the nation. If it be asked, whether this was not the period at which the promised deliverer might have opportunely entered upon *the scene*, let it be remembered that it was far more necessary that he should sit at this very season *behind the scene*, in the character of a refiner and purifier of silver. His appearance would indeed have been very opportune and seasonable, if a deliverance similar to that which was wrought by the hand of Moses or in the days of the Judges had been contemplated. But such was not the case; although it is worthy of notice that the Pagan power, which was bent upon the destruction of the Jewish constitution, was just at that time swallowed by the Roman empire. (Dan. ii. 39, 40.)

The majority of the Hebrew nation were absorbed in their own imaginary greatness, and blinded by a fanatical national pride, in which they would cleave to the dead letter of the constitution. It was the interest of a time-serving priesthood to flatter a narrow-minded Pharisaical bigotry, and to give new consistency to the outward form of the constitution, so as to render the external ceremonies of the services of

Jehovah attractive and imposing. On the other hand, the infidelity and licentiousness of the Sadducees had so corrupted the whole body of the nation, that Josephus, the Jewish historian, did not hesitate to confess of the mass of the people: "I cannot refuse to declare what the nature of the case demands. I believe if the Romans had hesitated to fall upon this frivolous nation, an earthquake would have swallowed, or a flood would have drowned them, or the lightning of Sodom would have burned them up. For this generation was more wicked than all those could have been who suffered these things." But amidst all this, there was a remnant according to the election of grace, which was most earnestly waiting and looking for the Consolation of Israel, and the Desire of all nations!

18. Whilst a profound silence was thus brooding over the elements which had been deposited in the bosom of the Jewish nation, the Pagan world was being agitated by a convulsive expection of the Desire of all nations. God had not left himself without witness among the Gentiles. But a different method had been adopted to prepare them for the promised blessing in which they were to participate. There was a deep calm upon the face of the peculiar people for about four hundred years; but the waters of the Pagan world were being troubled in the meantime by a radical dissatisfaction as to every existing form of spurious Religion. The Pagan nations were left, in

a general sense, to their own devices. God permitted the deadly disease which had poisoned their whole existence to assume all the alarming symptoms of extreme danger and distress, in order to prepare them for the appearance of the divine Physician, and to produce a deep sense of their deplorable inaptitude to effect a cure by their own efforts. The misery of sin and its awful consequences should stare mankind in the face; the departure from the living God should be acknowledged, and its effects should be most bitterly felt. The lying and murdering propensities of the old Serpent should universally and experimentally be brought before the human race at large. In order to wean them from following any longer their own ways, the sting of sin should for once pierce into their consciences in such a manner as to render it hard for them to "kick against the pricks."

Pride is the radical evil of fallen man, in which he fancies himself to possess powers and faculties which are no longer his own after he has separated himself from the living God. A proud individual cannot be brought better to a conviction of his own weakness than by being allowed to make every possible experiment upon the resources of his own imaginary power and might. Before he has felt the overwhelming extent of his own infirmity, he will never stoop to desire foreign aid. The experiment had been made amongst all the distinguished nations of Pagan antiquity, and the doleful confession had been successively wrung from them severally, that

they had gained nothing firm and nothing satisfactory! According to Pliny, one thing only was certain, and that one thing was, *that nothing certain was to be found upon earth; and that nothing was found more miserable and more proud than man!* The scattered rays of truth, which had been a rod and a staff to comfort Pagan philosophy, could suffice no longer. The self-created systems of religious belief had lost their primitive charm, and ceased to fascinate the mind of their original admirers. In vain was every effort to infuse new life into the mouldering mass of Pagan superstition. The philosophical systems, which had for ages engaged the attention, and gained the admiration of the wiser and more serious portion of the Gentile population of the globe,—they also had exhausted the wisdom of the wise, and completed their time of revolution. A pestilential miasma arose now from the accumulation of their corruptible remains. One system had given way to the other, and a yearning desire for something more permanent and abiding, which would serve as a haven where the weary might be at rest, now agitated the human breast.

Whilst Josephus characterised the Jewish nation as being more desperately wicked than the people of Sodom and the people that were drowned in the flood, the Pagan writer, Tacitus, in like manner, anticipates the destruction of the world on account of the corruption of mankind. And Seneca, in his day, makes the observation:—"All is replete with crime, and vice every

where abounds. More evil is committed than can possibly be healed. The struggle and confusion are becoming most desperate. Whilst lust daily grows into sin, shame is rapidly declining. Veneration for what is good and pure is unknown. Every one yields to his own lusts. Vice is no longer the occupant of secret places, but it is made public before all eyes. Depravity has so far advanced, that innocence has become not only more rare, but now is a thing altogether unknown." What a striking confirmation of the truth of the picture which has been drawn of the Gentile world by the inspired Apostle! (Rom. i. 21—32.) The whole body of the Gentile world was poisoned in all its members, and required a *radical* cure at no distant period.

Thus a loud demand was created for something more real and satisfactory than could be expected from Pagan creeds, which could not stem the mighty torrent of corruption, or arrest the process of general dissolution. According to the candid confession of the most sensible Pagans, help was to come *from above*, to satisfy the demands of a languishing humanity; —a humanity which had been harassed and torn for ages by the superstitious vanities of a cruel idolatry. The great blessing of deliverance which had been promised to the fathers, and prepared in the education of a peculiar people, had thus emphatically become "*the Desire of all nations!*" There was one great and universal sympathy as regards the feeling of despair; the whole human race travailing in pain

together, and waiting with earnest expectation for the manifestation of the grace of God, which should bring salvation unto all men. It was a day of trouble and rebuke; the children were come to the birth, and there was no strength to bring forth. We have groans, anguish, and despair of nations which were labouring under the bondage of corruption, the like of which had never before been uttered since the world was made. We remember the Roman expectation of a mighty deliverer from the East at that period. We are informed of the Chinese having expected "*the Holy One*," who would "*appear in the West*," according to one of the predictions of Confucius. The Hindoos were even then looking for one of their last divine incarnations. The Persian Sosiosh was then expected to bring peace and salvation, as the true Oshanderbega, or "*man of the world.*" "For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, *Yet once more it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts.*" (Hagg. ii. 6, 7.)

In order to sharpen this keen sense of misery, the judgments of the Almighty were abroad upon the face of the earth. Under Tarquinius Priscus, pestilence destroyed the greater part of the nation. Whilst Nehemiah was engaged in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, this sore calamity spread over Ethiopia, Lybia,

Egypt, Judea, Phenicia, Syria, the whole of the Persian and Roman empires, over Greece and the adjacent countries, and raged for about fifteen years. On another occasion, it started from the ruins of Carthage, penetrated into Africa, and in Numidia only it counted no less than eight hundred thousand victims! Two years only before the birth of Christ, pestilence walked in darkness over Italy, and few people were left to cultivate the ground. Now, if the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed time; if the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming; if the inanimate and the animate creature waiteth with earnest expectation for the manifestation of the sons of God; if the brute animals and the insignificant insects prophesy a change in the atmosphere; if they have a foreboding of the fall of mountains, of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions; if the American savage dreams of the children of the sun, who were to come from the West, with a new Religion and new manners; if the Kaffers, and the Hindoos, and the Chinese recognise the fulfilment of ancient prophecies, when white teachers of Religion appear amongst them from the West; if the Etruscan priesthood and the Pythian oracle anticipate their impending destruction; —if these and a thousand other things be done, can we feel surprised at the discovery, that prior to the advent of Christ, the nations of the world should be *shaking with expectation of the things that were to come?*

To heal and soothe a broken-hearted world, which

was smitten with despair, and groaning amidst the dissolution of every system of spurious Religion, it required an object of adoration which condescended to man, first and foremost, in the soothing character of a divine Redeemer. It required something which appeared not again in the exclusive form of a national constitution, similar to that of the Jewish dispensation; but the general condition of the world demanded a divine herald of peace to all mankind. It was not the revival of pseudo-prophetical oracular powers that was to be desired, but the appearance of an individual who would concentrate in his own divine person all the different rays of divine revelation which had been scattered throughout the vast limits of space and time. and which were shed abroad both in the world of matter and in the world of spirit. It required a sacrifice, of which the Jewish sacrificial institutions laboured to convey an imperfect shadow, not a modification of those modes of mediatorial atonement which had exhausted the forbearance, and worn out the patience of an idolatrous world. It demanded the opening of the impenetrable veil of the invisible world from the top to the bottom, in order to show the true connexion of the present and the future; not a modified edition of what Pagan Mythology had fabled upon the subject. And behold, all that was requisite to suit this variety of purposes God had already prepared for the whole family of man.

Whilst, therefore, both Jews and Gentiles were

concluded under sin; whilst the former had nothing left whereof to glory against the latter; whilst apparent death was stamped upon the once efficient apparatus of the Theocratical constitution; whilst Gentiles and Jews united in the desire for the blessings which were to be unto all nations; whilst sin had entered into the world without respect of person, and so death had come upon all men; whilst both Gentiles and Jews, like sheep, had erred and strayed from God's ways, and followed too much the devices and desires of their own hearts; whilst there was left no remedy which had not been tried to cure the evil with which mankind was afflicted; whilst all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth; whilst from the sole of the foot even unto the head there was no soundness in the human species, but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores, which had not been closed, neither bound up, nor mollified with ointment; whilst all were overwhelmed by the feeling that they had sinned, and come short of the glory of God; whilst the words, "*Behold it is very good,*" were actually reversed into those—"*The whole world lieth in wickedness;*" whilst the history of the world had assumed the character of "*a revelation of wrath;*"—whilst all this was taking place, *the fulness of time* had come, in which the promised deliverance could be offered to a withered generation of Jews and Gentiles, under the most auspicious circumstances. "And where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is

the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" "God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. Where is boasting then? It is excluded!"

Should we, however, not expect that the fulness of time should be ushered in by a *civil* and *political*, as well as by a moral and religious revolution of circumstances, in favour of this great and mighty event? As in certain artificial clocks, many and various figures are brought into motion, when the bell strikes the hour; so the conclusion of some large and important period of time is always accompanied by a variety of events and revolutions in the history of nations. The advent of Christianity was by no means to be attributed to some casual and accidental concurrence of favourable circumstances. All was brought about "*according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.*" If it be true, that of him, and through him, and to him are all things; the whole aspect of *the fulness of time*, the whole complexion in men, in matter, and in circumstances at that period, must have been the work of his hand. We have already seen that the advent of a new order of things could not have resulted from either the Jews or the Gentiles; both labouring under a moral and spiritual weakness and infirmity, which had been unprecedented in the history of man. To expect that mankind should of itself be able to create a suitable remedy against the malady which

was raging in every one of its members and faculties, would have been to "*seek the living among the dead.*" All that had passed was brought about by the divine goodness and mercy. All that was now favourable to the advent of Christianity, was not the productive cause, but formed part of the preparations which had been made for its introduction. There was a "fulness of time," because there was a blessing to be communicated to the world, and not the reverse. Let us see, therefore, what was the posture which the political aspect of the world had assumed at this present period.

The blessing which now was expected, was to be unto all people. Now, as long as the ancient nations flourished in their highest glory, there was much to obstruct the national intercourse between them; and, with the exception of a very few philosophers and merchants, no one ever frequented foreign countries. If a highway was to be prepared for the spread of the gospel, this national exclusiveness was to be subdued and removed. The pliability of the Grecian character had done much to break down the middle walls of partition which had existed between the dispersed nations. By the famous expedition of Alexander the Great, the interior of Asia was opened; and thus the free intercourse between the East and the West was for ever established. But this barrier between the nations of the earth was still more effectually put out of the way by the warlike exploits of the Romans in

Africa and the East, and by their successful attempts to subdue the surface of the then known world. According to the testimony of an ancient historian, the history of the world only now assumes its *universal* character. All the different lands, from the river Euphrates to the Atlantic Ocean, from the Elbe to the shores of North Africa, were united under one head, under one law, and under one government! The communication between the civilized nations of the East and the West was now rendered comparatively easy; and the messengers could traverse, under the protection of the Roman citizenship, all these immense tracts of land, as soon as the gospel should have appeared. The scattered Jews themselves, also, lost much of their national exclusiveness, which very soon should be required no longer. The Hebrew Scriptures, too, had already been translated into the Greek language, and thus rendered accessible to the Gentile world.

The Scribes and Pharisees compassed sea and land to make proselytes from among the Gentiles; and although most of them were made two-fold more the children of hell than themselves, there were yet others, who were sincerely cleaving to the Jewish Religion, and who appear in the Acts of the Apostles as "religious proselytes," as "the people fearing God," as "devout men," who were prepared for the message of the gospel. Many, again, were neither Jews nor Pagans, who worshipped at one time in the synagogue,

at another, they frequented the Pagan temples; and it is respecting this class of people, that Commodianus says in his Instructions :—

> " Nudatus a lege decrepitus luxu procedis ?
> Quid in synagoga decurris ad Pharisæos,
> Ut tibi misericors fiat, quem denegas ultro ?
> Exis inde foris, iterum tu fana requiris."

Judaism had, indeed, so far made an impression upon the Pagans, that some of the Roman authors, at the time of the first Emperors, thought to have just cause to complain over it. And Seneca, at last, could even declare, respecting the Jewish influence :—

> " Victoribus victi leges dederunt."

Thus the way had been smoothed by the hand of that Providence which subdueth all things to himself, and maketh them work together for his own mysterious purposes.

19. There is, however, one more circumstance which no doubt was likewise instrumental in stirring up the nations of the earth, and preparing them for the blessed advent of our God and Saviour. Not only was the moral, religious, and political state of the world now such as to permit of his coming in "*the fulness of time*," a fulness such as there had never been one since the world began; but even the *physical universe* seemed to conspire with all other events and circumstances to solemnize the entrance of the Lord of Glory. There may be something novel to

some of our readers in this announcement; but before they form a judgment of the case in question, we would ask them to listen to a sober statement of facts.

When God Almighty made "two great lights, and the stars also," we are distinctly informed that they were created not only to divide the day and the night, and to rule the same, but also for the purpose of giving "*signs for seasons, and for days, and for years.*"

There is something marvellously grand and mysteriously majestic in the firmament of heaven, the sober contemplation of which will always wring from the pious spectator the exclamation, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him; and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" Hence also the pure delight of a pious author, when he gave utterance to words like these:—"I cannot say that it is chiefly the contemplation of their infinitude, and of the immeasurable space they occupy, that enraptures me in the stars. Still less do I regard them absolutely with reference to the life after this. But the mere thought that they are so far beyond and above everything terrestrial—the feeling that before them everything earthly so utterly vanishes to nothing—that the single man is so infinitely insignificant in the comparison with these worlds strewn over all space—that his destinies, his enjoyments, and sacrifices, to which he attaches such a minute importance, how all these fade like nothing before such immense objects—then that the constel-

lations bind together all the races of man, and all the eras of the earth—that they have beheld all that has passed since the beginning of time, and will see all that passes until its end. In thoughts like these I can always lose myself with a silent delight in the view of the starry firmament." Hence it no doubt came to pass, that after man had ceased to find delight in the pure worship of a holy God, he lifted up his eyes with reverence to the sun, and the moon, and the stars, which have been styled the "*poetry of heaven.*" He did not from the contemplation of the heavens understand and acknowledge the eternal power and Godhead of their Creator as by the things which are made; but he was led to view the heavenly bodies as chosen emblems of "the Father of Lights;" he perceived in them the symbols of that invisible and spiritual Majesty, which receded more and more from the horizon of his depraved mind. The mental faculties of man were blighted, and he adopted the brilliant luminaries as emblems of Him who dwelleth in light, which no man can approach unto. This was the first step towards idolatry. Man did not contemplate to depart from the good old paths, nor did he anticipate that anything derogatory to the divine Majesty or to himself would accrue from the fact of viewing the heavenly bodies as symbols and emblems. Yea, there may have existed a plausible cause to wish for a symbolical representation of the object of his religious worship—a desire to preserve the sacred trust by

hiding it, as it were, in something visible, something tangible, something accessible to every one's senses. When mankind was dispersed, there seemed to be nothing more adapted to serve as a symbol of the only true God than the great light that was made to rule the day; who was so glorious in his form, so sublime and regular in his apparent motions; his diminished vigour allowed nature to relapse, as it were, into gloom and decay. Thus the sun seemed well adapted to assist in his devotional exercises, and to serve as a remembrancer of the invisible God; and the rest of the heavenly bodies seemed also in their own way to facilitate the same object. But all this became a sad snare unto the sensual mind of fallen man. The heavenly bodies soon appeared as the abode of the Deity; and, finally, the symbol assumed the place, and received the honours of the Godhead, which it was originally supposed to represent. The gratitude which was supremely due to the Disposer of all bounties was gradually transferred to his instrument by the growing ignorance of man. The first instance in which mention is made of this idolatry we have recorded in Job xxxi. 26—28. Hence, also, the severe prohibition in the law of Moses, according to which "the man or the woman which have committed that wicked thing" were to be taken to the gates, "and stoned with stones till he die." (Deut. xvii.; iv. 19, 20.)

Israel was not to be defiled by the symbolization of

the heavenly host; the Lord had "taken them to be unto him a people of inheritance;" but to the Gentile nations, according to the original, God had "measured out" the heavenly bodies. The mild and extenuating view which Holy Scripture takes of this kind of spurious worship, at a period when God "winked at the times of that ignorance," was, however, never extended to the worship of beasts and images; and we can clearly see that the prophets were always more severe against the adoration of stocks and stones than against the symbolization of the God of Israel by the heavenly host.

As the worship of the sun, the moon, and the stars, seems to have gained ascendency amongst all the Pagan nations, at a very early period, it deserves some further inquiry as to the causes of this their propensity. Our readers will probably remember the great, but vain efforts of Charles V. to make two watches perfectly agree with one another, and an experiment on our own part will easily convince us of the impossibility to prevent variation taking place for any length of time. They will, perhaps, likewise recollect M. Breguet's happy experiment to remove these difficulties, by placing the machinery of two watches in one and the same case. There seems to be a strange, magical influence of one upon the other, which counteracts every irregularity, and produces perfect harmony.

Now man seems, in every respect, most intimately

connected with the universe around him, not as one machine is brought under the influence of another, but the connexion subsisting between man and the world, is, in some respects, of a real and organic character. As regards the planet upon which man lives, the connexion is too palpable to require any detailed remarks. Man was made from earth, and the earth was made subject unto him. When man corrupted his ways before God, the lightning of the divine curse passed the head of the offender, and fell upon the ground, which it was his destiny to bless by his presence and activity. At length his corruptible body should return to his mother earth. (Job i. 21.) "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope; because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." (Rom. viii.) From these and similar considerations, the intimate connexion between man and the planet which he inhabits is sufficiently clear.

The earth in its revolutions is, however, only one link in the stupendous machinery of the universe, and we are thus likewise put under the immediate influence of other planets and other worlds. Thus, for instance, the moon exercises a most powerful influence, not only upon the whole vegetable kingdom, but even

upon the constitution of man. The influence of the moon upon the human body has been observed by every medical practitioner, of whatever colour, climate, country, skill or age. People are taught to believe the existence of such an influence in their childhood, and as they grow up, they believe it from personal experience. In colder climates, this influence is less evident than in tropical latitudes. After the combined observations of a body of professional gentlemen, who were resident in warm climates, a medical theorem has been framed, and it has been established as a matter of fact, that "the fluctuating force of sol-lunar influence, co-operating in all its various stages and degrees with the various modifications of the paroxysmal dispositions, excites febrile paroxysms to attack on all the days of the neaps and springs, and supports and reiterates them, according to various types, until the commencement of the different neaps; at which junctures, the maturity of the critical disposition happening to concur with the periodical decline of sol-lunar influence, these paroxysms subside, and come to a termination or crisis, and thus form different successions of paroxysms, constituting fevers of various length and duration. The tendencies of fevers, during the springs and neaps, are indeed liable to frequent and remarkable deviations, from the various stages that the moon may happen to occupy on her own orbit; by which her distance from the earth may be considerably increased or diminished, and conse-

quently also her power." This is one instance of the sympathy existing between man and the heavenly bodies.

Again, we discover at a very early period of the world, two modes of computing the lapse of time, the one following the apparent revolutions of the sun, the other those of the moon; and the attempt to reconcile both has caused much confusion. It was, however, the mysterious nature of man which was found to resolve the problematical anomaly between the solar and the lunar revolutions; and that in man, as the crown of all the works of the Almighty, as the end of his ways, and as the solution of the great problem of the visible creation, a measure should be found, by which the seeming irregularities of the universe should be solved and peaceably adjusted, can hardly be a matter of surprise. When the moon has completed ten revolutions, we have nine solar months, or three-quarters of a year. And this period of nine solar months, or ten lunar months, which consists of two hundred and seventy-three days, is properly the *human* year, man being born into the world at the expiration of that time. Generally speaking, during this period, man attains the fourth part of his stature. In four times two hundred and seventy-three days, or in three years more, he attains another quarter, or, one half of his total stature. In eight times two hundred and seventy-three days, or in six years more, he attains a third quarter; whilst in sixteen times two

hundred and seventy-three days, or in twelve years more, he reaches his whole length. How intimately, therefore, man is concerned in the revolutions of the heavenly bodies, as to his growth, could not remain a secret to the ancients. And we know, for a certainty, that the ten-monthly lunar year, which was adopted amongst them, was adopted with special reference to the measure of time, which was given in the nature and history of man.

The supposition of different methods of computing time can alone solve the differences which exist between the chronology of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament and that of the Septuagint. Hence the discrepancy is likewise to be adjusted, according to which there was a famine of seven years in Egypt, whilst another account speaks of nine years. Again, whilst sacred and profane writers estimate human life at seventy or seventy-two years, others, computing by a different method, speak of ninety-six years. Hence, also, to mention only one more instance, we can alone solve the difficulty which arises, when Josephus writes at one time that the twenty-two books of the Jews embraced a period of five thousand years, whilst in another place he himself reckons only three thousand seven hundred and twenty-seven; because five thousand ten-monthly lunar years make three thousand seven hundred and twenty-six solar years.

Again, the general age of man is supposed to be seventy years, and this is exactly the three hundred

and sixty-fifth part, or *one day* of the *great year* of the world, of which we shall probably have to speak on a future occasion, and which amounts to twenty-five thousand nine hundred and twenty earthly years. Holy Scripture considers the average age of man to be one of these days. "In the morning it flourisheth and groweth up: in the evening it is cut down and withereth." (Psalm xc. 6.) The Jews divided the day into twenty-five thousand nine hundred and twenty parts, which is the average amount of the respiration of a healthy individual per day. There are likewise in the human age an equal number of risings and settings of the sun, that great light which ruleth the day; for seventy years amount to about twenty-five thousand nine hundred and twenty days.

Hence it would appear that the starry firmament is to man, as it were, a stupendous clock, which regulates his very breath, the number and the length of his days and months, and the average number of his years. The smallest hand, which points out the hours of the day and of the night, moves on the dial-plate one degree in the time of four minutes. The hand which regulates the month advances one degree every day. And the third hand, which points out the very age of man's earthly existence, advances in about seventy-two years one large degree, and perambulates the whole of the heavens in twenty-five thousand nine hundred and twenty years!

When the child of man discerns Venus again in the same position as evening star at the same season of the year, he is reminded that a ninth part of the average age of man has elapsed to return no more. The reappearance of Jupiter, and still more of Mercury, under the same circumstances, points out the lapse of one quarter of the average age of man. The re-appearance of Mars announces the lapse of a fifth part of his earthly existence. When the same man again recognises Saturn in the same position at the same hour, then his days will be declining fast; and when at last Uranus is again discovered in the same sign of the Zodiac in the spring, and when the hand of the large clock of the heavens has thus passed over one of its large degrees, then the hour-glass will have run down, and dust return unto dust!

If it must be admitted by every candid mind that wonderful is the connexion of human existence with the motions of the brilliant luminaries of the heavens, should we think it unreasonable that these heavenly bodies, the destiny of which it was to be "*for* SIGNS AND FOR SEASONS, *and for days and for years*," should in some way or other have been likewise pointing to the great jubilee of the world, to the fulness of time in which God had purposed to visit his people? In order to ascertain this point, we shall now return to our immediate subject, from which we have apparently swerved in the previous remarks.

20. We shall now attempt to lay very briefly before

our readers, that there had been a most extraordinary coincidence in the ancient systems of Chronology; that there was, according to all of them, a new era of time, commencing at the time of which we have been speaking in the latter part of this present chapter; that as chronological systems are the reflection of the revolutions of the heavenly bodies, the nations of antiquity must have contemplated the starry firmament as the stupendous clock which the Almighty had suspended in the universe, for the sacred and mysterious purpose of serving "for signs" respecting the blessed event by which the great jubilee of the world should be ushered in; that there was, indeed, a grand and marvellous jubilee celebrated in our planetary system, which coincided with the blessed advent of the Saviour of the world; that the position of the different planets to each other at the time of his advent was for the first time again exactly the same in which they were at the time of their creation; that the different wheels and hands in the stupendous machinery of the magnificent clock of the universe, which had been made to be for *signs*, have, from the very commencement, been put in motion in such a manner as to point out withal that great and solemn hour in which he had resolved to enter the world; and that, therefore, the universal expectation of Christ was also in this respect most natural and necessary; for when this "fulness of time" was come, God sent his Son, made of a woman.

The whole ancient world, with a fervent desire,

watched for the rise of this bright luminary of the world of spirits. There was something mysterious in the firmament above them, which aided materially in bringing about the worship of the heavenly bodies. The world at large recognised a kind of language in the stars; astronomy and the interpretation of the "signs" of heaven was of a purely religious character. But how sadly it was misunderstood by the Pagans in general! How far did they swerve from apprehending the real character of this heavenly language, even after the mystery was in all probability revealed to the primitive fathers!

It was, however, the "hope" and privilege of the people Israel to celebrate in every cycle of the moon, and in every jubilee of their solemn assemblies, the type of the period of periods, and to recognise in every revolution of the heavenly bodies a pledge of the fulfilment of the times when God would visit his people. Hence, also, the inspired Psalmist seemed to read in the stars not only the insignificance of the child of man, but also the certainty of God "visiting him." "What is man, that thou art mindful of him; and the son of man, *that thou visitest him?*" In order, therefore, to inquire more deeply into the cause, why, in the fulness of time, not only Israel, but the whole world, from China to the isles of Great Britain, was in solemn expectation of the wonderful "star of Jacob," let us for a moment glance at some of the leading systems of ancient *Chronology*.

Of all sciences, that of the most punctual calculation of time was most *religiously* attended to by the ancients. Nothing has been more abused, indeed, than even this science of Chronoloy; confusion has been caused by the solar and the lunar calculations, both of which were attended to, as well as by a tendency to exaggerate the numbers to a most extravagant and wild extent. Yet, notwithstanding the lamentable want of perspicuity and reasonableness of most of the ancient chronologies, we yet perceive a certain fundamental number, which seems to recur again and again, and that number is *four hundred and thirty-two*, or *four thousand three hundred and twenty*. This number occupies a conspicuous place, not only in the chronological, but also in the metrological and astronomical systems of the ancients.

It may be observed, in the first place, that the number four hundred and thirty-two, or four hundred and thirty, expresses the relation of our globe to the planetary worlds; that is, the mass of the several planets, if put together, is, four hundred and thirty, or four hundred and thirty-two times as great as that of the planet upon which we live and move. The diameter of the orbit of the earth around the sun, consists of four hundred and thirty-two semi-diameters of the latter luminary. The diameter of the orbit of the moon around the earth, amounts exactly to four hundred and thirty-two diameters of the moon. The year of Jupiter, or his orbit round the

sun, amounts to ten times four hundred and thirty-two days, or an equal number as our planet counts revolutions during that period, viz., four thousand three hundred and twenty. A year of Saturn consists of four hundred and thirty periods, each of which is about twenty-five days long. The remotest planet, Uranus, counts ten times four hundred and thirty-two, or four thousand three hundred and twenty solar semi-diameters, as his distance from the sun. The distance of the fixed stars amounts to about four thousand three hundred and twenty semi-diameters of the orbit of the remotest planet, Uranus.

A year was by some nations divided into four thousand three hundred and twenty hours; and the day again was subdivided into four thousand three hundred and twenty minutes. The synodical motion of the moon advances during the time of a lunar year exactly four thousand three hundred and twenty degrees; and in a hundredth part of a day exactly four hundred and thirty-two seconds; and the time of *twice twenty-five thousand nine hundred and twenty* synodical months was exactly four thousand one hundred and ninety-one solar, or four thousand three hundred and twenty lunar years, at the expiration of which period, as we shall presently see, "*God sent his Son, made of a woman.*" See page 149.

The number of four hundred and thirty-two and four thousand three hundred and twenty seems likewise to have been sacred among the Hebrews. In the

first place, the Kor as a measure of solid, and the Homer as a measure of fluid substances, were at last subdivided into four thousand three hundred and twenty smaller portions. The year consisted of three hundred and sixty days, and as each day contained twelve Chaldean hours, we have four thousand three hundred and twenty hours per annum. Again, if we refer to another mode of reckoning time, which assumed seventy-two periods per day, we have four thousand three hundred and twenty periods in the space of two months. If every one of the twelve hours of the day be subdivided into minutes and seconds, we have ten times four thousand three hundred and twenty seconds per day.

But the same wisdom which has thus balanced the heavenly bodies, seems to have introduced the above number of four hundred and thirty-two also into the history of his people. The period from the creation to the flood amounts, according to the Hebrew text, to one thousand six hundred and fifty-six solar years, or, in other words, it amounts to twenty times the time of seven times four thousand three hundred and twenty days. The Hebrews were in the bondage of Egypt for the time of four hundred and thirty years. The one thousand two hundred and ninety days in Daniel xii. 11, are exactly three times four hundred and thirty days. Then, again, the time of three hundred and ninety, and again forty days, during which Ezekiel was to bear the iniquity of Israel and Judah,

amounted to four hundred and thirty days. (Ezek. iv. 5, 6.) The emigration of Abraham from Haran took place about four hundred and thirty-two years after the catastrophe of the flood. From the going forth of Abraham from his kindred to the journey of Jacob into Egypt, we have exactly one half of that remarkable period of four hundred and thirty-two years. To the time of their sojourn in Egypt, as amounting to four hundred and thirty years, we have already alluded. From the time of the Hebrews taking possession of the Land of Promise to the building of the temple, we have again four hundred and thirty-two years. From the foundation of the temple to its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar, we have again four hundred and thirty years. From the time of the first destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar until the desecration of the temple of Jehovah by Antiochus Epiphanes, we have again four hundred and thirty years. We count on the whole three and a half times four hundred and thirty-two years from the taking possession of the Holy Land to the destruction of the last temple by Titus; or one thousand five hundred and twelve years, a period which was of the highest importance to the ancient Egyptians.

Now, it is surprising to find that this apparently sacred number of four thousand three hundred and twenty, or ten times four hundred and thirty-two, should form the basis of all ancient chronologies, to which in the lapse of time noughts were added without

number and without discrimination. We first refer to the Chaldean Chronology.

The account of Berosus and Suidas brings the period from the Creation to the Flood down to one hundred and twenty Saros. According to Berosus, a Saros consists of three thousand six hundred years; and the whole period therefore would amount to no less than four hundred and thirty-two thousand years! Suidas considers the hundred and twenty Saros to be equal to two thousand two hundred and twenty-two years. The Hebrew text, in perfect harmony with his account, fixes the said period at one thousand six hundred and fifty-six years, since one thousand six hundred and fifty-six solar years are exactly two thousand two hundred and twenty-two years of ten lunar months. Again; one thousand six hundred and fifty-six solar years were equal to four thousand three hundred and twenty periods of each fourteen days long, or about four hundred and thirty-two thousand tenths of the bi-monthly period from new to full moon. We have already spoken of years consisting of ten lunar months, or two hundred and seventy-three days. We know, likewise, that the Egyptians had, besides their solar calculation, years consisting of no more than one, or of two, or of four months. The Arcadians had a three-monthly year. We mention this to soften our surprise at the statement of Berosus, when he makes the one hundred and twenty Saros equal to four hundred and thirty-two thousand years, which were no more than tenths of bi-monthly periods.

According to the Chronology of the Hindoos, the first period of the world contained four times four hundred and thirty-two; the second period contained three times four hundred and thirty-two; the third period contained twice four hundred and thirty-two; and the fourth and last period contains simply four hundred and thirty-two years; or, altogether, ten times four hundred and thirty-two, or four thousand three hundred and twenty years. The noughts at the end were doubtless added without calculation, simply to gratify a wild imagination, which delights in exaggeration of the grossest kind; thus we have at one time 4,320,000, at another 4,320,000,000, or even as many as 4,320,000,000,000.

We have, therefore, distinctly the number of four thousand three hundred and twenty years; and what is particularly to be observed is the fact, that each of the several ages was concluded and opened by the advent of some incarnate deity as the Saviour of the Hindoos. Chalias appears on Ceylon in that character after the human race had fallen deeper and deeper for the period of four million three hundred and twenty thousand years. The incarnations of Vishnoo are effected at the end of some one or other of the ages of four thousand three hundred and twenty years; and one is yet to take place at the end of this present age, consisting of four thousand three hundred and twenty years. Shalivaganan, or the era of Shalivan, commences pretty nearly at the commencement of the Christian era.

The Sosiosh of the Persians was expected at the end of the third, and at the commencement of the fourth period of the world. As we shall see, on another occasion, the age of the world in the Parsee Mythology was divided into four periods, each of which consisted of four thousand years. According to another account, the periods amounted only to one thousand four hundred and forty years; the three periods, therefore, which had expired when Sosiosh was to appear, amounted together to four thousand three hundred and twenty years. It is, therefore, worthy of remark, that the third period, which bore the name of Sal Chodai, or "*year of God,*" expired in the four thousand three hundred and twentieth lunar, or in the four thousand one hundred and ninety-second solar year of the world, when Christ was born!

In the Egyptian Chronology we have not indeed the remarkable number of four thousand three hundred and twenty; but it is as remarkable as it is certain, that the Canicular period, which embraced one thousand four hundred and sixty-one years of three hundred and sixty days each, was concluded, according to the testimony of Censorin, with the third period, or the Sal Chodai, of the Persians.

In the Buddhist system of Religion, also, every age is concluded and opened under the particular supervision of some divine Buddha or other. The era of Shakya-Muni was generally fixed at the middle of the sixth

century before Christ. Shakya-Muni was to appear, according to the Varaha Sanhita, in the year two thousand five hundred and twenty-six after Yudhisthira, who lived at the Flood. If we add the sum of years which were counted before the Flood, we receive again four thousand one hundred and ninety-one solar, or four thousand three hundred and twenty lunar years! Although we perceive that Shakya appeared, according to Buddhist Chronology, several centuries before Christ, it is worthy of remark that he was thought to appear in the four thousand three hundred and twentieth year. If we assume four Buddhas, and divide the number of four thousand three hundred and twenty years into four equal parts, the fourth and last holy period was opened by the fourth Buddha, at the commencement of the Christian era. That the last was meant to appear at the end of the four thousand three hundred and twenty years, is likewise confirmed by the Chronology of the Jains, a heretical sect of the Buddhists. According to the Hyperborean doctrine, Apollo descended after the lapse of each cycle of nineteen years, or, according to another account, at the end of each Apis period of twenty-five years; and the two hundred and twenty-second cycle of the former was concluded in about the year 4320.

According to the Chronology of the Etruscans, the new sovereign of the world was expected sixty years before Christ, when their chronology completed the

eighteenth century; but, according to Censorin, their cycle was completed in the year four thousand one hundred and ninety-one, or, according to lunar calculation, in the year four thousand three hundred and twenty.

Again, one hundred and nineteen years before Christ, it was declared in Rome that the eighth age or revolution of time was concluded, and that a new era had commenced. Juvenal, who wrote towards the end of the first century of the Christian era, declared that the age in which he lived was worse than the iron, and had no longer any name. One of the eight periods was considered by some to consist of five hundred and forty years, by others it was reduced to five hundred years. If we assume the former to be correct, we shall find that each consisted of the eighth part of four thousand three hundred and twenty years. But the reason why these eight periods did not coincide with the four thousand one hundred and ninety-one solar, or the four thousand three hundred and twentieth year of the world, was a confounding of solar and lunar calculation. The uncertainty as to the precise conclusion of the eighth era of the Roman chronology, will further appear from the conduct of Nigidius Figulus, who was highly celebrated as a profound astronomer and mathematician, and who was at the same time initiated into the mysteries of his day. The Senate being assembled on the 23d of September, in the year sixty-three before Christ, in order

to consult about some urgent business of the State, Octavius, one of the senators, appeared rather late. By way of making an apology, he said that the reason of his being too late was because a son had been born to him. Nigidius Figulus, on hearing the excuse, exclaimed: "Well, then, unto thee is born the son, who will be Lord and king over us!" The Senate, being already confounded by the oracles of the Sybillian books, which declared that *Nature* was about to produce a mighty sovereign, seemed now still more confused. They passed the resolution, that no son who should be born during that year should be brought up; and the execution of the resolution was only prevented with difficulty by those senators whose wives were in circumstances which were likely to bring them into embarrassment. Some of the flattering tongues of the age afterwards explained the prediction of Nigidius Figulus, as referring to Augustus, who was born sixty-one years before Christ. The fact, therefore, that Augustus was deified and honoured with temples and sacrifices during his lifetime, may have been caused by the misapplication of the national expectations in the Roman empire.

Well known are the words of Virgil, who wrote about the beginning of the period of Herod the Great. Complimenting as he was to the Roman consul, Pollio, in one of his famous pastoral poems on the birth of his son, he expressed the mind of the nation on the subject which is now under consideration, when he sung:—

"Now the last age decreed by fate is come,
And a new frame of all things does begin;
An holy progeny from heaven descends;
Auspicious be his birth, which puts an end
To the iron age, from whence, too, shall arise
A golden state, far glorious through the earth;
Enter upon thine honour, now 's the time,
Offspring of God, oh, thou great gift of Jove!
Behold, the world, heaven, earth, and seas do shake,
Behold how all rejoice to greet that glorious age!"

Now what is remarkable is the fact, that, according to the best chronologists, the advent of the "*Desire of all nations*" was celebrated in the four thousand one hundred and ninety-second solar, or in the four thousand three hundred and twentieth lunar year of the world; a period of which, more or less, all the ancient nations had some idea! When the "*time was fulfilled*" in the most eminent of Pagan chronologies, *God sent his Son, made of a woman!* The holy period of four thousand three hundred and twenty years seems to have been written in very legible letters in the *magnitude*, the *distance*, and the *revolutions* of the heavenly bodies; but we can scarcely fancy man to have been able to understand its meaning without a revelation having been given to the primitive fathers.* Of this we discover traces in the coincidence of the chief systems of Pagan chronologies; in the recurrence of the same sacred number of four hundred and thirty-two,

* Lest this should seem fanciful, we simply refer to the gleaning of one of the antediluvian prophecies, respecting the *second advent* of Christ, in the Epistle of St. Jude, v. 14.

or four thousand three hundred and twenty; and in the fact that, more or less, all of them expired about the time of the advent of the Saviour of the world, who was "the unknown God" of every worship, the desire the Gentiles. Yea, every single year with three hundred and sixty days, counted, as it were, four thousand three hundred and twenty typical hours, and pointed to the great Jubilee of the world!

Before we, however, show that the planetary system itself celebrated a jubilee on the grandest scale at the time when God sent his Son, made of a woman, we must indeed first inquire, what was the state of things respecting the chronology of the people Israel?

The Jubilee period of the Hebrews consisted of forty-nine solar, or of fifty lunar years. The seventh day of the week was the sabbath of the Lord; the great atonement fell on the seventh month of the year; the seventh year was to be a "sabbath of rest unto the land;" and seven times seven "sabbaths of years" should be counted as the Jubilee period of forty-nine solar, or fifty lunar years. In the fiftieth year should the trumpet be caused to sound on the seventh day of the seventh month in the day of atonement! Liberty was to be proclaimed throughout all the land; every man returned to his possession and to his family. The Jubilee period was, on a larger scale, what every day, every week, and every year was in a small way. Thus, for instance, the lunar year contained as many weeks or sabbaths as the great

Jubilee period contained days of atonement. The solar year of the Hebrews, which they reckoned before they went out of Egypt, was also after that period the foundation of their civil era. Whilst the civil year commenced at the time of the autumnal equinox, the supposed time when the world was created, the ritual, or ecclesiastical year, commenced six months later, at the time of the vernal equinox; and whilst they counted forty-nine solar years, they lived already in the fiftieth lunar or Jubilee year. As the forty-nine solar, or fifty and a half lunar years are equal to *six hundred synodical months*, the beginning of the *seventh hundred* fell exactly into the middle of the Jubilee year; and we have, therefore, in the seventh hundred of months, a Jubilee sabbath indeed, when the ox was freed from the yoke, and the servant from his master.

The Jubilee period of fifty years, or the period of six hundred months, seems to be important in the history of man; as important, indeed, as we found the period of ten lunar months, of which we have spoken above, and with which the period now under consideration is closely connected. The lapse of the first seven years in the age of the child is attended by the change of teeth. At the age of the second period of seven years, the age of puberty commences, and it is completed at the end of the third and the fourth period of seven years. The expiration of the fifth period of seven years is attended by the system

being finally matured and settled. At the completion of seven times seven years, the daughters of Eve, who are most liable to periodical changes and infirmities, celebrate *a year of Jubilee*, in being now set free from the troubles and the "sorrows" which were "multiplied greatly" unto them from the beginning! The body becomes now more composed and tranquil, and thus ripens for the grave.

Again, as we found the number four hundred and thirty-two important in the history of the chosen people, so the epoch of ten Jubilee periods, of ten times six hundred, or of six thousand months, seems to be very conspicuous. From the building of the tabernacle in the wilderness, to the construction of the temple of Solomon, we have exactly ten Jubilee periods, or six thousand months. From the consecration of the first, to the consecration of the second temple, we have again six thousand months, or ten Jubilee periods. The same period of time we have from the commencement of the kingdom under Saul, to its destruction under Zedekiah. Finally, from *Moses*, by whom was given the *law*, until *Christ Jesus*, by whom came *grace and truth;* from the taking possession of the Land of Promise, to its final devastation; from the giving of the law to its fulfilment,—we have exactly three times six thousand months, or thirty Jubilee periods!

The period of six hundred years was sacred, according to Josephus, already to the fathers before the flood;

and it is highly remarkable, that the completion of the seventh cycle of six hundred years falls into *the midst of the days of the Messiah*, or into the four thousand three hundred and twentieth lunar year of the world. We have, therefore, exactly eighty-five Jubilee periods, or four thousand three hundred and twenty lunar years, as the "*fulness of times;*" and the advent of Christ fell, therefore, into the beginning of the eighty-sixth Jubilee period. We have already seen, that the constitution of Israel lasted three and a half times four hundred and thirty-two, or one thousand five hundred and twelve years. But, if we count from the slaying of the Paschal lamb, to the end of the eighty-sixth Jubilee period, we are brought to the very hour when the great sacrifice was made on Golgotha, in Jerusalem.

Whilst we have three and a half times four hundred and thirty-two, or one thousand five hundred and twelve years, during which the constitution of Israel existed, we have again seventy times one thousand five hundred and twelve, or seven times four thousand three hundred and twenty days, from the date when it was renewed by the mandate of Artaxerxes, or from the beginning of the seventy weeks of Daniel, to the days of Antiochus Epiphanes. Who will fail to recognise a "*fulness of time*" in these circumstances? We have a day of rest on the seventh day of the week; we have a Sabbatical year in every seventh year; we have six hundred months in fifty years; and when

the last of the six hundred months expired, on the eleventh day of the seventh month of the forty-ninth solar year, commenced the solemn *Jubilee* festivity! The expiration of four hundred and eighty-five solar years, which contained six thousand months, was always attended in the history of Israel with some great blessing, or some great promise; as we have already observed, at the interval of six thousand months the tabernacle and the temple are finished. After another six thousand months, the second temple stands, and the promise is given, that though inferior in external glory, it would yet be more glorious than the first, because of the Lord coming to his temple. From the renovation of the Jewish state to the advent of Christ, we have again ten Jubilee periods, or six thousand months. The importance of the number of ten times six thousand will appear from the fact, that a talent was divided into sixty thousand gerahs.

Six hundred years before Christ, commenced the Babylonian captivity; and three times six hundred years before that period, was the beginning of the Egyptian captivity. When *seven* of these periods of six hundred solar years had expired, since man fell into the captivity of sin, "*the time was fulfilled, and the kingdom of God was at hand.*"

We cannot forbear to digress for one moment from our subject, in order to allude to the remarkable fact, that the period of six hundred years seemed to be important in the history of man in general. If we

count from the year one thousand two hundred before Christ, when the Egyptians and the Phœnicians seemed to figure in the history of the world, we shall find Nebuchadnezzar, after six hundred years, in power and greatness. From him, to the commencement of the Christian era, we have again six hundred years; and from Christ to Mohammed, once more the same period. From the commencement of the Mohammedan era to the power of Genghis Khan, we have again six hundred years. When the Roman empire seemed to be at an end, the priesthood appealed to ancient oracles, which had prophesied the existence of the State to be twice six hundred years. The Oriental empire had lasted six hundred years, when Constantinople was taken by the Turks. From the time when David took possession of Jerusalem, to its destruction by Titus, we have again twice six hundred years. Exactly six hundred years after Carthage was destroyed by the Romans, Genserich retaliated the deed upon Rome. When six hundred years had expired, after the Anglo-Saxons had subdued the Britons, the former were subdued by the Normans. The Germans had destroyed flourishing provinces and towns of the Grecians, and after six hundred years, the Hungarians measured with the same measure to the Germans. And again, after six hundred years, the Turks fell upon the Hungarians. It seems that already the ancient Pagans recognised this dealing of an overruling Providence, when they declared that every nation had allotted to it its "*own day*."

As the six hundred months of the Jubilee period were divided into seven Sabbatical years, of which each contained eighty-five months and three quarters, so likewise the *period of six thousand months was sub-divided into seventy smaller periods*, of which each contained eighty-five months and three quarters; and we understand, therefore, why a period of six thousand months was called "*seventy weeks*" by the prophet Daniel. A week contained seven days; a Sabbatical year embraced seven common years. A Jubilee period consisted of six hundred months; and the period of four hundred and eighty-five solar years, or six thousand months, embodied again seventy periods of seven years, or seventy times eighty-five months and three quarters. The seed of the woman, therefore, appeared when *eighty-five and three quarters Sabbatical years* had expired since the Babylonian exile, and exactly after the revolution of *eighty-five and three quarters Jubilee periods* since the melancholy exile from Paradise! Whilst the sacred number of six thousand years consists exactly of seventy Jubilee periods, or seventy times eighty-five years and three quarters; if the time is computed by solar calculations, we have, from the creation of the world to its redemption, four thousand one hundred and ninety-one years. If we calculated by lunar months, we find that the Messiah appeared at the expiration of four thousand three hundred and twenty lunar years, to which period all Pagan chronologies seemed to point as the great Jubilee of the world. That Christ was expected at the

time when "*he came to his own*," by those who were waiting for the joyful sound of the silver trumpet, is sufficiently clear. And a certain Nehemiah had declared, fifty years before Christ, that the Messiah could not come later than after the expiration of another Jubilee cycle. According to a very ancient prophecy, which is found in the tract Sanhedrin, in the Talmud, and which was ascribed to the prophet Elias, the advent of the Messiah, and the end of the world, would fall together with the expiration of the eighty-fifth Jubilee period. According to another Talmudical prophecy, the war with the dragon was to cease, and the days of the Messiah be ushered in by the year four thousand two hundred and ninety-one. Now, this sum also has been identified by eminent chronologists with the fulness of time, during which the Messiah appeared, viz. in the four thousand three hundred and twentieth lunar year of the world.

That the Jubilee periods pointed distinctly to the fulness of time, is clear from the circumstance, that with a view to excuse their unbelief, they corrupted their chronology after the commencement of the Christian era. The present chronology of the Jews has not been universally received amongst them before the eleventh, or even before the fourteenth century of the Christian era! but it is ascribed to Rabbi Hillel, who lived in the fourth century. When the Messiah appeared, ten times four hundred and thirty-two lunar years had expired. The Jews, however, from motives of a base character, dropped a tenth part of the period

of four thousand three hundred and twenty years, or, in other words, they omitted four hundred and thirty-two years in their calculations.

If we once more reflect upon the chronologies of the ancients, and the Jubilee periods of the Hebrews, we indeed find occasionally a discrepancy as to the exact moment of their expiration. But whilst we willingly allow them to vary in the same manner as some of the best watches will do occasionally, we yet find that all pointed to the days, "*when the time was fulfilled.*" But as all chronologies are merely the reflection of the motions of those heavenly bodies, which were made for signs, and for seasons, and for years, we may naturally expect that the cycles of time had their prescribing cause in the solar and planetary system. *The chronologies celebrated a Jubilee, and spoke of the "year of the Lord," because the heavenly bodies celebrated a Jubilee of a most wonderful character.*

When Christ was born in the city of David, our planet counted *four thousand three hundred and twenty lunar years.* Mars had completed his *two thousand two hundred and twenty-second revolution.* We found that the antediluvian world counted exactly 2222 lunar years; which period was subdivided into four hundred and thirty-two thousand portions of time.

Saturn finished *his twelve times twelve*, or his one hundred and forty-fourth rotation. Jupiter counted as many years as the ancient lunar and ritual year counted days, viz. three hundred and fifty-four. The Asteroids completed nineteen times the Jubilee num-

ber of *fifty*, in their revolutions. Mercury had numbered *seven times seven* as many revolutions as the ritual year comprehended days, viz. three hundred and fifty-four, and *forty-nine times* the amount of Jupiter; or, in other words, whilst the Asteroids had celebrated nineteen Jubilees, Mercury celebrated *seven times seven* the Jubilee period of fifty years. Venus numbered as many years as one of the most eminently important chronological and astronomical periods counted days, viz. six thousand seven hundred and ninety-seven. And finally, *Uranus, the remotest of all planets, whose distance from the sun amounts to four thousand three hundred and twenty solar semi-diameters, had just completed the fiftieth of his revolutions around the sun, each of them being a complete Theocratical year of the planetary system. Having always taken the sovereign lead in the bright courses of the goodly company of his fellow planets, Uranus at length celebrated a Theocratical Jubilee in the four thousand one hundred and ninety-first solar, or the four thousand three hundred and twentieth lunar year of the world; for at that time was born "in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." When he had travelled his orbit fifty times, the multitude of the heavenly host sounded the truly evangelical silver trumpets of a universal Jubilee on the fields of Bethlehem, "praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and goodwill towards men!"*

Let no one be surprised at this marvellous display

of sympathy, at a period when the mightiest of all the deeds of the Almighty was accomplished. There shall be once more "*signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars;*" "*and then shall again appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven,*" and all the tribes of the earth shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. (Luke xxi. Matt. xxiv. Gen. i. 14.)

We therefore infer from the preceding facts, that the great period in which fell the great event of our Saviour's advent was, in the whole planetary system, and in the history of its revolutions, the most marked and the most significant since the world was made; and that this system even then touched in several respects the most gracious and joyous notes of the jubilee trumpet. And it is therefore no matter of surprise that the ancients have searched and studied so religiously the hieroglyphical book of the firmament, in which it was written, in "what or what manner of time" should come the "Desire of all nations," by whom, and in whom, and unto whom were all things made. When in the most ancient times the emperor of China solemnly ascended the observatory at the time of the new moon, to celebrate the revolution of the small cycle of time, in which were typified the cycles of the great jubilee of the world; when the Egyptian priest celebrated amidst manifold ceremonies the lapse of the year; when by divine command the new moons were to be kept as solemn feasts, and when the Paschal lamb was

annually to remind the Hebrew of the sacrifice, which was to be made at the end of days,—we have every where the same hand pointing into that futurity in which God would send his Son, made of a woman. The heavenly bodies were made to "be for signs" respecting *the fulness of time*, but never for the astrological purposes for which they were subsequently abused.

It is apparent from the above considerations that the period in question was as remarkable in an *astronomical* point of view as it was in its moral, religious, and political aspect. We should indeed wonder if any one should feel surprised on being told that some extraordinary phenomena in the heavens had been recognised by the wise men of the East at that period of our Saviour's blessed advent. For the satisfaction, however, of some unbelieving Thomas, we would simply allude to the fact, that part of the jubilee in the planetary system was a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, which took place in the year of Christ's birth. It was first seen in the month of May, and that "*in the East.*" (Matt. ii. 2.) It reappeared in the month of October; and the third time it became visible was in the month of *November*, when it appeared no more *in the East*, but *in the South*, and this at the time of the evening. Supposing, therefore, in connexion with our preceding argument, that this conjunction, which appeared to the naked eye only as one bright star, was the identical star of the wise men, the going before them on their way to Bethlehem would only be understood in that modified

sense of the words in which, for instance, we speak of the rising and the setting of the sun. Again; as it is no where said that the star stood over the very house, but generally "over where the child was," whilst the house is only afterwards mentioned, there seems to be no very serious objection against the assumption. We do not deny the miracle, after having proved that the condition of the world, in a physical, moral, and religious aspect, was emphatically *miraculous;* but as it is one of the principles of divine government never to incur any waste of miraculous powers when they can be spared, we should feel inclined to think that the star of the wise men was the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn. In connexion with the *solemn aspect of the world around* and the *heavens above them*, the bright conjunction was quite sufficient to identify the star of Jacob's hope, and the object of Abraham's faith, to whom the promise was given, that through his seed all nations of the earth should be blessed. Or was there nothing sublime, marvellous, and wonderful in Jupiter and Saturn contributing their radiant glory to the star of Him in whose person even then appeared a gracious *conjunction of the light to lighten the Gentiles*, and of the *glory of his people Israel?* And this at a time when the one planet had exactly finished the significant number of *twelve times twelve* of his rotations; whilst the other had completed as many years, as the *sacred* year, which pointed universally to the "*fulness of time*," counted days!—*See* Rom. xi. 33—36.

CHAPTER III.

DEVELOPMENT OF TRUE RELIGION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

1. From what has been said in the previous chapter respecting the condition of the world at the coming of the Messiah, it is plain that only the appearance of *the grace of God, which bringeth salvation to all men*, could really comfort the human family. It is evident that the crisis in the history of the world had, even at that period, overtaken the human race as a woman in travail. Despair and woeful disappointment seemed to be the only result of all the efforts which had been made to soothe and comfort a broken-hearted humanity. The boasting of imaginary powers was at an end, for the treasures of human power and wisdom were entirely exhausted. The Pagan world had been borne by the divine forbearance for ages, and permitted to spend the last breath of energy in the pursuit of peace and happiness. But it is a notorious fact, that the Heathen, having sinned without the law, were then actually perishing without the

law. As the offspring of God, they were to seek after the heavenly parent, if haply they might find him. But although he did not leave himself without a witness, they did not find him, but changed the truth of God into a lie.

On the other hand, the Jews were endowed with the law which was good and holy, but they did not keep it, nor were they saved by the same. Whilst endeavouring to keep the law, they were to experience their weakness and sinfulness, and be prepared to embrace the righteousness which is by faith. Not having attained the righteousness which is by the works of the law, or the righteousness which is by faith, they sinned against the law, and were judged by the law. The melancholy disease had thus come to its very crisis respecting the whole family of man; all the ordinary and extraordinary means from which help was expected having proved fallacious cisterns, which yield no water. If, therefore, salvation was to be obtained from any other source than from heaven, this was the most unfavourable of all ages of the world; and the condition of the world at that period was the most hopeless of all that ever existed, or could be imagined. According to the united testimony of the most sober individuals of the Jewish and the Gentile world, mankind was stretched as a mouldering carcass before the open sepulchre which was to bury them, with all their theories of salvation, with all their manifold and grievous dis-

appointments, and with all their mighty schemes to ameliorate the world. The process of dissolution and decay being felt most severely where the highest flights of human intellect had been accomplished, the truth could be no longer hid from the eyes of the world, that it required the making bare the arm of the living God to effect a satisfactory reorganization of the whole state of the universe. The time was *fulfilled;* the *fulness of time* had come; the *end of the world* had appeared; the crisis in the history of the world had ushered in the grand catastrophe of the universe, which involved the *redemption* as well as the *judgment* of the world. It was the day of the Lord, which should at once burn like an oven, and be distinguished as "*that day*" on which the sun of righteousness should arise with healing in his wings. (Mal. iv.) The world was united as it had never been before, in a sense of unutterable misery; in a feeling of universal despair; in a desire after the grace of God, which should appear to bring salvation unto all men,—as much as it was united in language and by the bond of political government. It will be remembered that the successive efforts of the Assyrian, Persian, Macedonian, and Roman powers had all aimed at founding a universal empire, which should embrace the whole world. But instead of bringing that happiness and peace which were expected, it brought universal misery, woe, and destruction. And it came now to pass that the height of human misery was

concentrated in this fulness of time; and the marked desire of all nations for help and comfort now opened the gates of the world, that the King of Glory might come in.

The condition of the world, the history of which had assumed the character of the "*revelation of wrath*," demanded the manifestation of God in a manner in which he had never yet appeared during any of the previous ages of the world. Sin and death, which came into the world by the first man, should now be removed. On the other hand, the eternal purpose of divine love, which was to be carried out from the beginning, was now to be *resumed* by the second man, as *the Lord from heaven*. It is worthy of Almighty God to accomplish the very greatest things by small and insignificant means. If the present crisis could have been met by the introduction of another ritual constitution, upon some modified or new plan, or by the mission of some chosen and inspired vessel, there would have been no necessity for the incarnation of the Deity. But it could not be accomplished. Nor was it to be any other than the immediate agency of the blessed Godhead that should confer so great a boon upon the human race at so great an emergency. In order to carry out the original purpose of God respecting mankind, he was to descend into our nature, and bring life and immortality to light, by being tempted like ourselves in all things, and by taking upon himself human guilt, bearing the sins of

the world in his body upon the tree. He was to be tempted in all things like ourselves, so as to represent the type of humanity in its immaculate purity and integrity, and thus unfold, as the Son of man, the glorious character which should have been exemplified in mankind at large. But Christ our Lord, by virtue of his own divine nature, represented not only what man was originally destined to represent in the presence of God; he also became "the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him." In him all were to pass from death to life, that through him they might have it more abundantly. The guilt of the first man was propagated upon his posterity by generation and birth; and as with the guilt, so it was to be with the grace of God that appeared unto all men. We are to be made partakers of the holiness and righteousness of the second Adam by being *born again* of incorruptible seed, and regenerated of water and of the Spirit. Being baptized into his death, and raised again by the power of the Father, we are to walk in newness of life; being conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. "*Ut homines nascerentur ex Deo, primo ex ipsis natus est Deus. Descendit Deus, ut assurgamus.*" Christ was not only to be an individual member of the human family; he was to appear not only as a man amongst men; nor yet was he to descend from heaven in the mere character of one who is the bearer of some extraordinary revelation to the world; but he was to appear

as the "*Lord from heaven*," as the head over all things visible and invisible; as the son of man, as the second Adam, from whom a new race should date their origin; for "to as many as received him, he gave power to become the sons of God."

It is from this circumstance that the genealogy by which the Gospel history is introduced derives so great an importance. This genealogy of the Redeemer is one of those phenomena in sacred literature which have nothing equal in the history of man. It was preserved pure and entire down through more than four thousand years. By the fact of this genealogy of the genesis of the Redeemer being placed at the opening of his biography, the intimate connexion which existed between him and the first man, on the one hand, and between him and the progenitor of Israel, on the other, has been strikingly exhibited. Jesus, the Son of man, in his genealogy, appears as the heir of the blessing of Abraham—yea, of the blessing of humanity in general. On the other hand, he is likewise represented as having inherited the entire curse which rested upon the house of David, upon the nation of Israel, and upon the whole family of man! Both seem to be implied in the remarkable division of the genealogy of Christ into three times fourteen generations, and the reception into it of members of the human family who were distinguished by grievous *sins* no less than by their *piety* and *faith*. The number seven was that of the perfect development of nature; the number twice seven

intimated a perfect development of the genealogical line; and the number three times fourteen implied the most perfect development of the holy line as the depository of the Theocratical treasures. And then, what a noble line of descent from the great parent of our race! The family of Seth is separated from that of the ungodly Cain, the line of Shem from that of his brothers; Abraham is called from his country and his kindred; the promised seed in Isaac from that of a scornful Ishmael; the lion of Judah from his weaker brethren; the inspired king from the rest of the sons of Jesse; and from this royal branch, at last, is set apart *the Son of Man, who is separate from sinners, and higher than the heavens!* God is showing mercy unto the third and fourth generation—yea, unto thousands of them that love him! (Exod. xx. 6.) Soon after the promise of a serpent-bruiser was given, a long chain, as it were, of successive births was opened, the last link of which was the *woman's* seed, the Son of man, the Lord from heaven!

It will hence appear, that the manifestation of the Deity in the flesh, however marvellous and startling it may appear, by no means took the world by surprise. God had, at sundry times, and on divers occasions, manifested himself to his people, if not in *human nature,* yet certainly in *human form.* This partial anticipation of future events in the history of revealed Religion, is one of the most striking features which are met in its gradual development. After

having been plainly shown forth in the first of all promises, this mystery of godliness had been further prepared by numerous *Theophanies*, or manifestations of Jehovah, in the Old Testament. And it is certainly one of the most pleasing discoveries, to observe how new epochs in true Religion existed, long before their actual appearance. Yet this extraordinary feature is by no means without some analogy even in the province of physical life. How invariably, for instance, is it the case in the animal sphere of life, that the several organs of the body are growing towards maturity long before they are actually required. There are no parts of the animal body which have not been in existence a considerable time before they are actually required to discharge their several functions.

2. The Word was made flesh. This is the mystery of godliness. But here again we have to begin with very small things; with a small babe, an infant of days. These are the ways of the Almighty in the kingdom of grace, no less than in the kingdom of nature. Christ appears as the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person; but not in the splendour of worldly greatness. Christ was born not in the imperial palace of the celebrated Romans, but in a dark corner of the holy land, amongst the insignificant people of the Hebrews. And, from his birth to his death upon the cross, his lowliness of mind, and his humble appearance in person, were the rock of

offence. Whilst the Hindoo was looking out for an incarnation of Vishnoo; whilst the Iranian fire-worshipper was expecting the "*man of the world*" in the person of Sosiosh; whilst the Chinese were awaiting the advent of "*The Holy one from the West;*" whilst the Buddhists were anxious to welcome the appearance of another Buddha, and whilst the interpreters of the Sybilian divination waited in Rome for the arrival of some "*mighty deliverer from the East;*" whilst the wise men in the East were watching during the stillness of night for the star of the promised *King of the Jews;* whilst the worldly Jew was looking into futurity for the coming of a *worldly Messiah*, and, finally, whilst the true Israelites were devoutly waiting for the *consolation of Israel*, Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, in Bethlehem, and laid in a manger. The first intimation of this great event, as being about to be accomplished, was communicated to a ministering *priest* in the *temple at the hour of prayer;* and it was by this circumstance that the still existing remnant of the Theocratical constitution was *honoured* by Jehovah. The Saviour of the world appeared not as the son of Adam, but as the "*seed of the woman;*" for that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. In contradistinction to the old corrupted type of humanity, he represented the visible and glorious image of the invisible God, being a "new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness." Human nature, therefore, celebrated

in Jesus a triumph of unspeakable magnitude, being raised in his blessed person to a far greater height of happiness and dignity than we could ever have aspired to reach, even upon the supposition of our retaining a state of immaculate holiness and purity. The coming of Christ was not like that of the first Adam, but his mission from the Father bears a peculiar impress. He descended from that sphere of life, and from those heights of glory, which are peculiar to the "Father of glory," and which "no one can approach unto."

The advent of Christ was a free, spontaneous act of taking upon him the seed of Abraham. Being in the form of God, *he took upon himself* the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, *he humbled himself*. Hence his birth could not be brought about by, nor was it dependent upon, physical necessities, and the general laws of nature. He enters upon his state of incarnation by virtue of the same power by which mankind was originally created in him, by him, and unto him. He is, according to his own testimony, at once the *root* and the *offspring* of David. The coeternal, coequal, and ever-blessed Son of the eternal Father, is conceived of the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary!

Mankind could not produce salvation from their own resources; and with all their *groaning and travailing in pain together*, the nations of the earth were unable to *produce* and give birth to a Saviour. As the animal world had not the power in itself of pro-

ducing and creating the first man, as little, and much less, was it in the power of mankind to produce the second Adam, the Lord from heaven. Yet, with all the alarming weakness and frailty by which mankind were encompassed, they were yet to have some part in this great event; *God sent his Son, made of a woman.* The fact, however, of God sending his Son *made of a woman* when the fulness of time was come, distinctly implies that the mission of Christ not only concluded the period of time which was then *fulfilled*, but that it likewise opened a new era in the history of the world. This new man, who appears opening the second and the last era of the world, was, however, put under the law of the old humanity, that through him they might receive the adoption of sons. He is made of the woman, but conceived of the Holy Ghost; he is circumcised, and thus put under the law, but his name was given unto him by God; he is presented to Jehovah as a "male that openeth the womb," but a just and devout man, who waited for the consolation of Israel, feels inspired at the sight of the great salvation which God had prepared before the face of all people; he is subject to his parents, but he knows at the same time that he must be about his Father's business; he comes to John to be baptized with water, but he is anointed with the Spirit without measure. He goes unto the Jordan with those multitudes that went to confess their sins and to be baptized with the baptism of repentance, but he went thither with the

high resolve to fulfil all righteousness, and to keep the law, which had been transgressed by the whole world. He might have had "joy," but he endured the cross, and entered as a sound member of the human family to carry their sorrow. When Christ appeared amongst a multitude of sinners to fulfil all righteousness, and when the spirit descended upon him, John recognised "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world."

3. There was a period in the history of true Religion, when we rejoice to behold a holy and a separate people in the midst of a world which was immersed in superstition and idolatry; we recognise in their Theocratical constitution the antidote against the corruption which had seized upon the whole family of man. We have now no longer only a separate nation as the depository of these great hopes which involved a blessing unto all nations, but we have standing in the midst of men Jesus Christ, "God blessed for ever." Christ, as the sole bearer of the divine revelations to angels and to men, now dwells among us, and we behold his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Having spoken at sundry times and in divers manners in times past unto the fathers, God spoke at last by his Son.

There is a profound mystery of godliness hanging over the private life of our blessed Saviour previous to his baptism, and we have but a very few glimpses

vouchsafed unto us in Holy Scripture. One thing is certain; ever since the fall of man there has been a "wheel within a wheel" in the propagation of the mystery of iniquity. This mysterious wheel has been revolving with every succeeding generation, in every single human breast, from *lust* to *sin*, and from *sin* unto *death!* The corruption had been gathering strength in its downward progress; the wheel had been increasing the velocity and power of its rotation, and, like a mighty torrent, the temptation now rushed against the "Rock of ages," who now dwells among men in order to stem this overwhelming flood; he was come into the world to break the current, to retrieve the motions of that mighty wheel, and to break effectually the power of temptation at every step of his holy life. As the Captain of our salvation, Christ was to open a new and living way; and in order to accomplish this, he would gather all the fiery darts of temptation into his holy soul. And who could conceive and tell the great agonies of his spotless mind when these manifold temptations advanced against him, like a mighty torrent, in the days of his flesh, and when he *offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared?* (Heb. v. 7.) Christ, from the very nature of the case, must have been sensible to temptations as no one could be sensible besides him. And as he understood and felt them as no one besides could feel and

understand them, he was likewise the only one who could resist and overcome them. How infinitely great and blessed appears our adorable Saviour in the sinless development of his human nature, amidst so powerful temptations in the world around him. He is treading the wine-press alone, and there is no one with him! He is *sacrificing* his whole life to the will of his heavenly Father. His whole existence, his every thought and desire, is diametrically opposed to the rapid stream which rushes against him. But there was to be another, a more particular temptation to be endured, before he entered upon his public ministry. The Spirit which descended upon Christ, and which was seen remaining on him, driveth him into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, because the temptation of the Messiah could as little be avoided, as it was to be dispensed with in the case of the first Adam. Christ having been anointed as the Son of man to judge the prince of this world by his public life and ministry, it was meet and right indeed that the temptation should be placed at the beginning of his ministerial work.

If we were to have an high-priest who could be touched with a feeling for our infirmities, he must needs, in *all points*, be tempted as was Adam, and as we are, yet without sin. (Heb. iv. 15.) He was without sin, having resisted every breath of evil, and broken the power of temptation at every step of his humiliation. As the children of men are partakers

of flesh and blood, so he also took part of the same, for he took not on *him the nature of angels*, but he took upon him the *seed of Abraham*. Wherefore in *all things* it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high-priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. (Heb. ii.) Nor yet could Christ have left us an "example, that we should follow his steps," if he had not been tempted in the days of his flesh, and had not overcome the temptation. But there are mentioned especially two particular occasions in the public life of our Saviour on which he was tempted; the one being at the beginning, and the other at the end of his public ministry.

It was the devil's fraud to tempt the first man to anticipate, in a faithless manner, what he was to attain by a faithful obedience to the prescribed mode by which he was to grow up in the likeness of his maker. The second Adam was come as the Lord from heaven, to "bind the strong man and to spoil his house," and to bring to light immortality and life by the gospel; and it was the subtlety of the old serpent to suggest likewise to him such means as should offer him a speedy accomplishment of that object. It was in the plan of the murderer from the beginning to induce the Lord Jesus to take a step in which he would have abused the power of his divine nature, as

well as the newly obtained ministerial unction of the Spirit, for selfish purposes; it was the object of the tempter to draw the Messiah from those paths of obedience and humiliation, in which he was to learn obedience by suffering. But Christ was the obedient "servant" of his heavenly Father; and it was the meat and drink of the Son of man to do the will of his "Father which is in heaven." Instead of yielding to the insinuations of the tempter respecting his Sonship, Christ relied upon the authority of the written Scriptures, in the character of a mere man, who would take no single step upon any other responsibility. When Satan had thus discovered how truly great and strong his dangerous foe appeared in thus adhering obediently to his Father, even unto death, he attempted to kindle in his holy soul a precipitant zeal, by suggesting such means and ways as seemed calculated to accomplish shortly the great work, and to achieve quickly the mighty task, by which he was to subdue all men and all things unto himself. But Christ, in patient and humble reliance upon the slow but certain progress of his mighty work, disappointed the wiles of the devil, declining to tempt the power of God, which would be faithfully administered in the behalf of his work, as long as he was guided in every one of his steps by what was pleasing to his heavenly Father.

When the tempter finally had hoped to bring this "servant" of God at his feet, by exhibiting before

him all the glory of his usurped power and greatness, the holy soul of Jesus is kindled with zeal for his Father's honour and glory, who will, at his own time, subdue all things under his feet, and with the velocity of lightning he thrusts the vile tempter out of his august presence. "And, behold, angels came and ministered unto him!" Thus, Christ, the mediator of the new covenant, the author and finisher of our faith, kept the commandment of his Father, and abode in his Father's love. He had come down from heaven, not to do his own will, but the will of him who had sent him; and was ready to minister, and to give his life as a ransom for many. He receives not honour from man; will do nothing of himself; but as the Father has taught him, so he speaks and acts in his state of humiliation. He knew that, by walking in the light of his Father's countenance, he could not stumble in the path which had been marked for his ministerial career. What a similarity between the temptation of the first and the second Adam! and what a mighty difference as to the result!

4. It was the object of our Saviour's mission to save the world, and to destroy the work of the devil. In being tempted like his brethren, Christ descended to that depth in which he could demolish its very foundation, and build upon the ruins a new order of things. Having put on the whole armour of God, the Messiah stood against the wiles of the devil, and wrestled not against flesh and blood, but against prin-

cipalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual wickedness in high places. With the shield of a faithful reliance upon the word of truth, he quenched the fiery darts of the wicked one; and with the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, Christ had entered into the strong man's palace. And it was even his purpose to descend, in faithful obedience to his Father's counsel, into hell; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. So deep should the foundation stone of the spiritual temple be laid! As true Religion had from the commencement been descending into the high-ways and by-ways, upon which the human family have erred and strayed from God's ways like lost sheep, and followed too much the devices and desires of their own hearts; as it had entered upon the several forms of the natural elements of human existence, in order to deposit the germs of eternal life in the very ground, upon which sin and corruption were luxuriating and bringing forth their deadly fruits,—so Christ took upon him our *flesh and blood;* he entered into the feelings and infirmities of our nature, being tempted in all points like unto his brethren; he descended even into the lower parts of the earth, and destroyed the kingdom of darkness in its very deepest foundations. But neither the one nor the other was stained by a shadow of blemish. Both descended only that they might ascend, far above all heavens, leading captivity captive.

Again, as in the development of Religion, all has been progressing gradually, with an almost imperceptibly slow but measured progress, so in the private and public life of our Saviour every thing has its season. Christ, in teaching, acting, and suffering, hence declareth the mind of the Father. He speaks that which he knows, and testifies that which he has seen; but he yet speaks at all times only so much as the Father has taught him. (John viii. 28.) The knowledge which he imparts of things heavenly, passes all human understanding, and confounds all human wisdom and power; yet all is unfolded according to the strict rules which his state of humiliation imposed upon him. For every motion in his holy life, there was a time and a season. He lived, and moved, and had his being in the blessed Father, who had sent him. Without him, he would do nothing; apart from him, he would accomplish none of the works which the Father had given him. He manifests his glory to glorify the Father; but always at the right place, and in the right time, when his "hour was come." And none of the most tender connexions upon earth could disturb the harmony of his pure soul, whose meat and drink it was to be about his Father's business, and to do the will of his Father. What was said of his works, is equally true of his words and doctrines. Hence he postpones the revelation of many of the words of life, until the Spirit was poured forth. Hence it was that his disciples were to do still greater things than himself. Hence

only also can it be explained, that he not only omitted to testify of the day and the hour, in which the kingdom of God should be fulfilled, but that he actually declared, that he himself did not know it. (Mark xiii. 32.) The hour in which the Father would manifest this great secret to the Son in his great humiliation, had not yet come. But the revelation of this and other mysteries was given unto his Son Jesus Christ, by God the Father, when "the hour was come," and he showed some of the things unto his servants, which were shortly to come to pass, whilst others were to remain sealed up. (Rev. i. 1; x. 4.)

As Christ, in his own private character, was to grow in wisdom and grace, so also in his official capacity, as the mediator of divine revelations, he was to hear and to see more and more, and to testify accordingly more and more of the Father, until he knew "*that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God.*" (John xiii. 3.) There is "*no robbery*" in his desiring to be like unto the Father, after he had made himself of no reputation, and taken upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man! Having humbled himself, he glorified the Father on the earth, and when he had finished the work which the Father gave him to do, he said, "And now glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." Having been obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, God also had

highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name. The Holy Spirit is testifying of Christ, and through him; but when exalted and glorified, the promise of the Father is shed forth by him; the Spirit glorified him in receiving from him, and showing it unto his disciples. (John xv. xvi. xvii.; Acts ii.)

Thus it was by degrees that the Son of man acquired power over all flesh, and received all things into his hands. He manifested his glory whenever the "hour was come." He was at all times conscious that he might show forth the brightness of his own blessed Godhead, which was folded up in the unseemly form of an obedient servant. He knew that if his kingdom were of this world, then would his servants fight, that he should not be delivered to the Jews. He was aware that Pilate could have no power at all against him, except it were given him from above. He felt that he could pray to his Father to give him presently more than twelve legions of angels. With the consciousness of this indwelling dignity, he kept the law and sanctified the Sabbath, although the Son of man was Lord even of the Sabbath day. With these feelings he paid tribute, and was subject to the authority of government as appointed by God, even to the death upon the cross! Although he received not testimony from man, he yet from the same cause appealed to the testimony of John the Baptist and of Moses. He was willing, for the joy

that was set before him, to endure the cross, and to be obedient unto death, despising the shame, enduring the contradiction of sinners against himself, in order to sit down as the first-born of many brethren at the right hand of the throne of God. Yet, with all this humiliation, it was not excluded from his public ministrations, to manifest his glory, as that of the only-begotten of the Father.

According to the original order of things, man was the divinely installed representative of God upon earth, upon which he was to exercise his royal and priestly functions. (Gen. i. 26—28.) The power given to man on this occasion was lost. The second Adam, as the Lord from heaven, was to possess the power not only in that ordinary, but in an extraordinary measure, inasmuch as not only a harmonious development was required, but a subjecting of the adverse powers which now were at work in the creation. Human nature in its fallen state was unable to do either the one or the other. Christ was in all things like ourselves, sin only excepted; and in order to regain the lost power over nature, it required the manifestation of the Godhead which dwelt bodily in his spotless humanity. He redeemed as our kinsman the lost sovereignty over nature, and exercised as God-man his miraculous functions. With the first man miraculous power to a certain extent would have been *natural;* it would have been a manifestation of his sovereign power over the earth. In Christ this

sovereignty was to assume a strictly miraculous character, inasmuch as human sinfulness, debility, and infirmity were now the natural state of things. But as much as his own person was above that of a common man, so much was his power over nature superior to that of Adam in his state of innocency.

Without difference of past or future, and without reference to local distance, he searches alike the hearts of men, the depths of Scripture, and the bottom of the sea. A breath of his blessing feeds the multitude with a few loaves. A breath of his rebuke calms the tempest of the sea, and withers the barren fig-tree. A breath of his healing powers cures the sick, gives sight to the blind, and strength to the feeble. A breath of his life quickens the dead, and rescues them from the power of the grave. He is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, and recognises the deeds, the plans, and fortunes of each individual, in great as well as in small things. The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, together with the future catastrophes in the history of the world, are made plain to his mind. His powerful influence reaches down to the gates of death and hell, whilst his perpetual intercourse with the regions of the world above, is opening a new and living way to eternal glory and bliss. But nothing is gained as robbery; as the Father giveth unto him, so he giveth unto the world.

5. When Christ was about to enter upon his ministerial work, he was anointed with the Spirit without

measure, and received the testimony of the love and good-will of his heavenly Father. When he had well-nigh finished his work as the great *prophet* of the Father, he was being prepared for his more immediate functions *of priest*, which were yet to be accomplished. His body, having been so impregnated with his divine Majesty, and with the powers of the world to come, during his previous course of obedience to the Father, by having habitually repelled every breath of the pollution of the world around him, and by his perpetual intercourse with his Father and the spiritual world; was now prepared, and made capable of being *transfigured*, to render visible his intrinsic majesty, and to receive from God the Father glory and honour. And as he some time before received the seal of his divine Sonship upon the occasion of his entrance upon his ministry, so now again there came "a voice to him from the excellent glory: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." He was transfigured before them, and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light, whilst Moses and Elias appeared in glory, and spake of the decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem! The Holy One was by no means subject to the law which involves the physical necessity of death. The Father had given him power over all, and therefore also over his own flesh. He had *power* to lay down his life, and *power* to take it again. No one could take his life, but he laid it down of himself. This,

however, could only be done by means of the very deepest humiliation, and the very greatest self-denial. Death to the ungodly sinner is the natural wages of sin; but the tasting of death to Christ's holy soul was unnatural in the truest sense of the term, and it could not be otherwise than fraught with unutterable woe. His whole existence was filled with a holy repugnance to surrender himself to the curse of death and the power of darkness; for he that until then had the power of death was the devil! As his anointing with the Spirit was followed by his conflict with the tempter, so now again, after the transfiguration, the prince of this world was to be cast out. Christ, through death, was to destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil!

But his own soul likewise was troubled above measure, even unto death, and was to be reconciled to the laying down of his life and brought into harmony with the will of his heavenly Father. Yet here also he is more than conqueror; willing to seek that which is lost amidst the terrific curse of death, to sacrifice himself to the pleasure of his Father and the glory of his name, and ready to die for us, while we were yet sinners. It was his own free and most gracious act to drink to the last drop the cup which the Father had given him; and it was his own good will and pleasure to taste death in its bitterest extremity—*the feeling of being forsaken by his heavenly Father.* Hence he was not overpowered from without, or

exhausted from within, when he terminated his life. He rather laid down his own life; with a loud voice he commended his spirit into the hands of the Father, and gave up the ghost, no one taking it from him. The going of Christ to the Father was not according to the law of necessity, but he brought his tribute unto death as an act of perfect liberty; yea, his death was brought about by an absolute power to lay down his life and to take it again (John x. 17, v. 26); and it was by this power that he passed from death unto life, and went to the Father in behalf of mankind. And because he gave his soul unto death by the eternal Spirit, his blood is, even on that account, the blood of the Son of God, which cleanseth from all sins. (1 John i. 7.) Out of that fountain of redeeming blood streams of healing will pour forth for evermore through that sacrifice, full and sufficient, once accomplished upon the Cross. Through immeasurable ages and countless worlds the glory of it will continue to resound, and the song of Moses and the Lamb will never die away. In his death the obedience of the Son of man was made perfect. His whole great work was *finished*. With his death the hour was come that the Son of man should be glorified. And as the gifts which he received from the Father as a reward during his humiliation were received in behalf of humanity, so also now, after having sanctified himself, he lives by the Father, and in taking again his life, he becomes the life of the world. Christ tasted the full

bitterness of death; hence it is never said in Holy Scriptures that he fell asleep. But he *died*, that his ransomed saints might *fall asleep*.

Christ, the Son of man, had thus been a good and faithful steward of the treasure of life and light, which he had received from his heavenly Father in behalf of his Church. Rich in the power of the Spirit, he was as if he had not. There was never a diffusion of his mediatorial blessings before the hour was come; he never reapeth where he hath not sown; he never taketh anything, "except it be given him from heaven." He is so far from taking anything, and from thinking it "robbery to be equal with God," that he rather robbed himself, making himself of no reputation, and taking on himself the form of a servant, and humbling himself in the fashion of men to the death upon the Cross! Christ was always sowing good seed in a promising soil, and having done so, he would patiently abide the blessed harvest. He assumed flesh, that he might give it for the life of the world; he has again taken his life, that they might have it more abundantly, and that as sin had reigned unto death, even so thenceforth grace might reign unto eternal life by Christ Jesus our Lord. All that was required to be done and suffered on account of the sins of the world, was done in his own body; his soul, therefore, was not left in hell, nor did his flesh see corruption. Dying, he destroyed the power of death; rising again, he opened the path of an indis-

soluble and endless life to his ransomed Church, and ascending to heaven, he leads many sons unto glory. And all this was achieved by a course of the deepest humiliation. Christ, our Redeemer, neither claimed nor received a single gift as unmerited grace from *his "righteous Father;"* but all was pure merit and righteous reward of his mediatorial work.

6. The Messiah appeared amongst the Theocratical nation as the son of Abraham, and the root and offspring of David; as the *Son of man*, Christ broke down the middle wall of partition, which had hitherto separated the Jews and the Gentiles. As the Messiah of his people Israel, our Lord came to his temple, and as such he was not dissolving but fulfilling the law. His disciples were not to preach but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Christ himself fulfilled in his own person every one of the minutest precepts of the Mosaical constitution; and he demanded from his followers the same implicit obedience to the spirit and the letter of the law. (Matt. xxiii.) Yet, as was to be expected, Christ appeared, on the other hand, already during his lifetime as the Saviour of the whole world. His miraculous power was not only exerted in behalf of the Gentiles, but he intimated the spread of his gospel among all nations, and predicted in no less unequivocal terms the approaching dissolution and humiliation of his people Israel.

When, however, Christ declared at one time, that he was not sent "but to the lost sheep of the house of

Israel," and at another expressed himself, that there were yet other sheep, which were not of the Jewish fold, which were to be brought under one shepherd, he in nowise contradicted himself. Salvation was to come from the Jews; and the Pagans, were to participate in the blessing which was to be given to them through Abraham's seed, by means of the rightly-appointed channel of the Theocratical constitution. It was to honour this venerable constitution that Jesus at first withheld his aid from the Syro-Phœnician woman, who had neither given up her Pagan idolatry, nor yet believed in him as the promised deliverer and Messiah of the Israel of God. The covenant of Jehovah with Israel, and the validity of the Theocratical constitution, were to be acknowledged by the Gentiles before they could partake of the joy which was to be unto all people. Christ was ready to help the centurion of Capernaum, and to give his Holy Spirit to Cornelius, because they believed in him, not as some extraordinary incarnation of a Pagan divinity, or even as merely a remarkable prophet, but as the Messiah, whose advent had been long ago prepared amongst Israel. They acknowledged the Theocratical character of the Jews, adored the living God Jehovah, and had given evidence of this their belief in the Jewish dispensation. (Luke vii. 4, 5; Acts x. 2.)

All this seems to have been very questionable with the woman of Syro-Phœnicia. No sooner, however, had she

acknowledged that the children of the house of Israel had the first claim upon the Messiah and his blessings, and that she begged as a Pagan only a blessing which could not interfere with their peculiar privileges, being, in addition, supported, like the centurion, by intercession from children of the promise, than the Messiah no longer withheld her request, but "her daughter was healed in the same hour." He appeared to the Gentiles as "the light of the world," and administered his miraculous blessings to all such of that body who acknowledged in him, not only a certain divinity, and a worker of mighty deeds, but the Messiah of Israel, who as such only was to be the Saviour of all nations.

The blessings of the promise could not be fully communicated to the Gentile world until he had reconciled both Jews and Gentiles unto God in one body by the Cross; having slain the enmity thereby, he came and preached peace to the Jews that were nigh, and to the Gentiles that were afar off. *Mors Christi vita Mundi.* When he was lifted up and exalted upon the cursed tree, he would draw all men unto him. And therefore it was that when Christ was told, that amongst "the world which was gone after him," there were certain Greeks who were anxious to see him, he answered them, saying: "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified;" and, pointing significantly and emphatically to his death, as the means by which the Gentiles should gain free access to the

blessings of the covenant, he added those remarkable words: "Verily, verily I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." When the Greeks would see Jesus, his soul is troubled; he asks the Father to save him from this hour; and yet, remembering that "for this cause," of becoming the Saviour to the whole world of Jews and Gentiles, he would "*fall into the ground*," he adds, with calm resignation: Let the hour come. "Father, glorify thy Name!" (John xii.) And as Christ was declared as the beloved Son, the first time on the occasion of his baptism, and the second time in the chosen circle of a few disciples, on the Mount of Transfiguration, so now the third time, "there came a voice from heaven," after a solemn entrance into the temple, when he was surrounded by the Jewish nation, and by the representatives of the Gentile world. According to this heavenly voice, God had glorified his name amongst the peculiar people during the old dispensation; and he would glorify it again by the foundation of a new economy of salvation, which should embrace not only the Jews, but also the Gentiles. For if the ministration of death was glorious, which glory was to be done away, how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious? The heavenly Father declared, in the sacred building of the temple, before all the people, that by the death of his dear Son, which was then spoken of, the first preparatory revelation should be made

perfect, and that a new and more exalted order of things should commence when his name should be glorified through Christ among all nations. And it was thus that the destruction of the temple of his body, and the temple which had been in building forty and six years, and which had served many centuries for a place where God had put his name, were things perfectly identical. (John ii.) When the Messiah went for the last time out of the temple, saying: "Your house shall be left unto you desolate:" Ichabod, the glory had departed!

7. When Christ appeared, the nation and the form of the Theocratical constitution still remained; but the spirit, which in former days animated the body of ceremonies and precepts, had escaped. It was honoured by our Saviour himself during his lifetime, "being daily in the temple;" and only five days previous to his meritorious death, he had again "suddenly come to his temple like a refiner's fire," to purify it, amid the joyful acclamations of the multitude, from the abominations by which they had made a den of thieves of what was intended to be a house of prayer for all nations. But as this barren fig-tree had retained merely a rich foliage, without bringing forth fruit; as the Spirit had fled, leaving only the dead letter of an empty ceremonial; as the substance was lost in the shadow; the constitution was now to be given over to destruction. The nation itself was to be dispersed among all nations, for, in rejecting the Messiah, they discontinued to be

God's peculiar people, and could no longer be instrumental in diffusing the blessing of which they had hitherto been the sole depositaries. The preparatory constitution could no longer benefit the nation, after they had refused the exalted person who was the very soul of their complicated ceremonial. Jehovah had indeed planted a vineyard upon this fruitful hill, and let it out to husbandmen; but, they having stoned his servants and killed his Son, they were to be miserably destroyed; and the Lord was about to let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, who should render him the fruits in their seasons. (Matt. xxi. 41, 42.)

When the Son died, he broke down the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles. He abolished the law of commandments contained in ordinances, making in himself of twain one new man; there being a faithful remnant, which were to be the nucleus, to which foreigners from the commonwealth might be added as members of a new body. Like that brave soldier, who figures in the annals of Swiss heroism for having embraced as many spears from the terrific phalanx of a mighty enemy as he could gather together into his own heart, with a view to open the enemy's ranks in behalf of his surviving brethren,—so the Captain of our salvation fell; but his fall was the fall of the foundation-stone, which ground into powder the sovereignty of death, and destroyed the law as far as it was set in ritual ordinances. Hence it was that co-instantaneously with his giving up the ghost, the vail of

the Temple, and with it the whole ritual constitution, was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom. After our Saviour had wept and lamented over Jerusalem, because they would not be gathered under his Almighty wing, "he went out and departed from the Temple" for ever, pronouncing those awfully solemn words, "Your house shall be left unto you desolate;" and he added, that they should not see his face again, till they should say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." This salutation ought to have been responded by the scribes, elders, and priests of the house of Israel, to the acclamation of the children; "Hosanna to the Son of David!" And as they have never yet so responded unto this hour, their house and country has ever since been left desolate; and the countenance of the Most High has, unto this day, been turned from his ancient people. (Matt. xxiii. 24.)

What then took place in the Temple when our Saviour "departed" from it, became visibly exhibited when the vail of the Temple was rent in twain by the finger of Jehovah. There was to exist henceforth no longer a Most Holy upon earth; the sacrificial rites, as shadows and types, were fulfilled, and therefore abolished. The Priesthood had lost its Theocratical character, when Christ entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. When the Jews and the Gentiles were made friends on that memorable day of atone-

ment, and covenanted one with the other to accomplish the destruction of the Lord of Glory, no fire fell from heaven to consume them, nor did the earth open her mouth to swallow them alive; but when Christ had given up the ghost, the sun put on sackcloth, the earth trembled, the dead left their dark abode, the rocks were rent in twain; and with the rending of the vail of the Temple, terminated the whole Theocratical constitution. By crucifying their Messiah, the Jews with their own hand crushed their national glory and greatness for ever, to be recovered no more.

The object of the constitution was partly to preclude the possibility of Paganism ever becoming universal; this barrier was now required no longer, inasmuch as a standard had been raised, around which the Jews and the Gentiles might rally as worshippers of the one true and living God; a point of union having now been gained which could not be discovered before the appearance of Him, who was the true image of the invisible God in contradistinction to a spiritless idolatry, by which fallen man had endeavoured for ages to stereotype, as it were, the blessed Godhead before their degraded and grovelling minds. The distinctive rites of the constitution were no longer required as a means to protect the nation from the pernicious influence of Pagan idolatry. The Spirit of life and of liberty having been poured out, the abolition of the preparatory institutions was unavoidable. The shadows of good things to come gave place to the substance. A

symbolical religion was no longer required, nor indeed could such meet the wants of mankind under the Christian dispensation. This has been shown in later ages of the Church, a variety of religious rites being from time to time introduced in proportion as "the light was put under a bushel."

The law of commandments contained in the Mosaic ordinances is transformed into the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. The covenant is no longer a covenant of the letter, but of the Spirit, including, without respect of persons, all the true members of the Israel of God; as they hold fast the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; being knit together by one faith, one baptism, and animated by one Spirit; and adopted into the family of one God and Father, who is above all, and through all, and in them all.

The Spirit of Prophecy had been most minutely setting forth this new order of things, and beheld from a remote distance of time how the nations of the earth were to walk in the light of Jehovah. We refer to only the last two chapters of the prophet Isaiah. In this remarkable part of Holy Scripture the Prophet plainly sets forth, that the brightest jewel and the highest honour of the Israel of God should be conferred upon the Gentiles; whilst Israel according to the flesh should be punished and destroyed; that there should, indeed, be a remnant saved of the ancient people of God, but that they should be called *by a new name*, whilst the old one should be left for

a curse; that a new order of things should be established, and a new heaven and a new earth should eventually be created; that a spirit of Gospel liberty should burst the shackles of ordinances "which were not good." Mercies as well as judgments were to be set up as pillars on the way of this new order of things. The fame and the glory of Jehovah was to penetrate the utmost parts of the globe; and the priests and Levites, which should be taken from amongst the Gentiles, were to be a royal priesthood in a new sense of the term; whilst the ark of the covenant was to be remembered no more, nor, according to some of the best translators and commentators, should there be sacrifices any longer. (Jer. iii. 16.) And thus, out of a small thing, the salvation of the whole family of man resulted at length upon the grandest scale.

8. There is, however, a striking peculiarity in the method by which this dispensation of the blessings of the Gospel has been accomplished. When our Lord took leave of the Temple, in which he "daily" taught the things pertaining to the kingdom of heaven, he did not rush forth from the sacred building in a state of excitement. But, having already uttered those remarkable words, "Your house shall be left unto you desolate," he yet once more sat over against the treasury, and beheld, like a stranger from another world, how people cast money into the treasury. Again, on the glorious morning of the resurrection, all was brought about with that unearthly calmness and dignity which was becoming the grand

character of so solemn an occasion. When he left the sepulchre, "the napkin that was about his head was not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself." Everything, small as well as great, was accomplished in a suitable manner. So, also, when Jehovah was about to scatter his once beloved people abroad upon the face of the earth, and to dissolve the venerable constitution which had served for ages as a channel by which to communicate his divine revelations to his people, the new order of things was to be introduced by a course of events which suited the occasion. The gulf between the Jews and the Gentiles had been the work of his own hand. He had himself separated this people from all other nations of the earth, to be a peculiar people. He had fashioned the constitution which should serve as a wall of partition between the Israelites and the Pagan world at large. And, however corrupt the nation may have been in its totality, there was left a remnant of true Israelites to serve his gracious purposes. And the gulf under consideration was too great to be overleaped without some preparatory measure which could serve as a medium to transmit the fulness of his blessing from the Israel of God to the Pagan nations of the earth. There were indeed a number of remarkable features, which could, under all circumstances, render the transition less startling even to the Jews themselves. The event itself had been contemplated ever since Abraham was called out of his own country. The Spirit of Prophecy had been

setting it forth as one of the most prominent features of the new dispensation. The appearance of the wise men from the East; the manner in which the Greeks were received by our Saviour; the miracles which he performed upon several members of the Gentile community; the prediction of this great event by parables and plain language; all these and other things tended to soften the surprise respecting the plan, which directly implied that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel.

When our blessed Lord gave his last command to his chosen heralds, to go into all the world and to preach the Gospel to all nations, he added, that they were to begin at Jerusalem. They were to receive the power of the Holy One, and to be his witnesses, first in Jerusalem, then in Samaria, and finally unto the uttermost parts of the earth. The apostles fulfilled literally the command of their ascended Master. In reading the Acts of the Apostles we observe, during the first seven chapters, how their operations were exclusively confined to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And it was only when the plant of the heavenly Father had been watered by the purple dew of the first of Christian martyrs, and the testimony of the Son of man had been opposed by a fierce persecution which arose at Jerusalem, that "they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word" in Judea.

After the church of God had been rooted in Jerusalem, it was next planted amongst the half-brethren of the Israelites which inhabited Samaria. According to the prescribed method, (Acts i. 8,) the witnesses of Jesus Christ were to transmit the Gospel from Jerusalem to the uttermost parts of the earth by way of Samaria. From the whole history and the character of this singular semi-Pagan population, it was evident that they were appointed by divine Providence to constitute a medium by which Christianity should be transmitted from the genuine Jews to the nations of the earth. Philip the deacon went down to Samaria and preached Christ unto them, and "there was great joy in that city." The field which had been cultivated amongst these semi-Pagans by our blessed Saviour's own ministry was "white already to harvest." Philip gathered fruit unto life eternal, that "both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together." And herein is the saying once more true: "*One soweth and another reapeth.*" And the hour had now come when the Samaritans should "neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father."

Scarcely, however, had Philip entered upon the labours of his adorable Master, and preached the Gospel in many villages of Samaria, when the angel of the Lord bade him to go toward the south, to add unto the church a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was returning to his own land from Jerusalem,

whither he had gone to worship. And thus the Gospel seemed to be given unto the Gentiles in the "*uttermost parts of the earth*," after it had taken root amongst the semi-Pagan Samaritans. We will not bring into consideration the coincidence, that our Saviour had on a former occasion (Matt. xii. 42) used the words, "the uttermost parts of the earth," as synonymous with Ethiopia, so that his command, to be his witnesses "unto the uttermost parts of the earth," would in the first instance have implied the country of Ethiopia. (Acts i. 8.) But there is something far more important connected with the circumstance that Ethiopia should first stretch out her hands unto God after semi-Pagan Samaria had received the Gospel.

The inhabitants of Samaria were worshippers of the only true God; they considered the patriarchs of Israel to be their patriarchs. They received, moreover, the five books of Moses as divinely inspired; and they were, notwithstanding the admixture of Pagan blood and Pagan ideas, the people who stood next to the nation which had the Theocratical constitution in its full integrity. We conceive, therefore, why our Saviour expressly commanded that after Judea, the Gospel should next be preached to them. As little was it merely accidental that the Gospel was carried into *Ethiopia*, immediately after the *Samaritans* had been made partakers of its inestimable blessings. There would, indeed, have no longer been any reason why Christianity should not be planted among any

one of the nations that inhabit the globe, "unto the uttermost parts of the earth," as no other nation besides the Samaritans had been particularly specified. But we maintain that there was a specific reason why *Ethiopia* should be the first after Samaria to receive the blessings of the Gospel.

According to traditions which are by no means incredible in themselves, the Ethiopians had partially embraced the Jewish Religion almost since the days of Solomon, to whom came the Queen of the South "from the uttermost parts of the earth." (Compare Matt. xii. 42, with Acts i. 8.) The remnants of Judaism which are still found among that remarkable people are very numerous and striking. Excepting, perhaps, the Nestorians, who had in all probability been part of the ten tribes of the house of Israel, there is no other nation on earth that can show so many elements of a purely Jewish character. The Jewish Sabbath is kept holy amongst them, to a certain extent, up to this present period, in addition to the Lord's-day of the Christian Church. The sacred rite of circumcision is practised amongst them with almost the same scrupulosity with which baptism is administered; and numerous other practices of a Jewish complexion are retained amongst them. And whilst it would be impossible for the dispersed tribes to exhibit a shadow of the house of David, that nation (we refer particularly to the kingdom of Shoa), to this very hour pretend to have upon their throne a descendant of the

son of David; and they have preserved a complete genealogy of his descent. Nor do the Abyssinian princes know of any other code of law than that which is preserved in the five books of Moses. We are not at present to investigate the character of the tradition by which a son of Solomon was transplanted into Ethiopia through the Queen of Sheba, on the occasion of her famous visit to Jerusalem. (1 Kings x.; 2 Chron. vi.) But it is sufficient for our purpose to know that the Abyssinians universally and firmly believe that their forefathers were proselytes to the Jewish religion previous to the Christian era. Nor is the visit to Jerusalem of an Ethiopian courtier *of great authority*, which was evidently of a religious nature, against this their allegation.

After the word of God had thus been taking root amongst the faithful remnant of true Israelites, and was hence successively planted amongst the semi-Jewish population of Samaria, and amongst the Jewish proselytes of Ethiopia, it is only then that the *conversion* of the great *Apostle of the Gentiles* is recorded in sacred history; and the Apostles were then taught by extraordinary visions, to extend their ministrations indiscriminately, "*without respect of persons*," to the Gentiles at large. And when, for the first time, the Holy Ghost fell on those who, from among such as had been entirely "foreigners from the commonwealth," had heard and embraced the word, Cornelius with his whole Roman company was added unto

the Church! And it was because these were the *first genuine* Pagans that were baptized with the Holy Ghost, that "they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter."

9. Christ then appears in the historical development of true Religion as the chief corner-stone, the head of the corner; embracing both testaments in his own blessed person. The law was given by Moses; grace and truth, however, came by Christ Jesus, inasmuch as through him the law became truth indeed, and the promises effectually grace. In Christ, many that came from the East and West sat down with Abraham in the kingdom of heaven! As the first man of earth formed as it were the keystone of the several works of the Almighty, and was as such appointed lord and head of the visible creation, so all the preceeding works of revelation in the spiritual sphere were concluded in the second man, who was the Lord from heaven. In him is given the true centre of gravity, the true focus from which all emanates, and towards which all is pending in every department of revealed Religion. He appears throughout as the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. The whole purpose of God's eternal love, with its gracious predestination to glory; the whole system of creation, providence, and redemption; every grace, preparatory, mediate, and immediate; every thing divine, and every thing human—in short, the whole *fulness* has its focus, centre, and headship in Christ.

In him all religious truth is embodied; in him all religious life is deposited; all revelation by word and deed, by creation and redemption, finds scope and energy in his adorable person. Without Christ, death rules in every province of spiritual and physical existence. In Christ only has been brought to light immortality and life, for he came that we might have it more abundantly.

In the economy of divine revelation, Christ appears before all things as the *servant* of God. (Isa. xl. 1; Matt. xii. 58.) In his servile capacity, Jesus was put under the law, to redeem them that were the servants of unrighteousness under the law. The first disciples of the primitive Church, who considered themselves as still under the law, made use of the same appellation, according to the original. (Acts iii. 13, 26; iv. 27, 30.) In the capacity of the Son of man, Jesus of Nazareth, the servant of God, receives the unction of the Holy Ghost, like all other servants of God. But he advanced to the very high and exalted position of Lord over all, by way of that obedience which he learned in his humiliation. His position as servant being only of a transitory character, that title also could only be temporary. There was, indeed, already a strong allusion to this higher position of the Son of man in the appellation which was used by the primitive Church, whence the translation of "child" in our English version.

It is, however, to be observed, that Jesus is said to

have *been made Lord and Christ by God the Father.* (Acts ii. 36.) The Son of man was anointed with the threefold unction of king, priest, and prophet; and in being made Lord, he was clothed with the executive power for the exercise of his several functions. Hence it is evident, that Christ is made by special divine appointment the head over all things, and, in a peculiar sense, the blessed head of the Church. Now, there is nothing extraordinary in the fact, that Christ is clothed with divine powers. We, as Christian people, glory in his Divine Majesty, and joyfully adore his blessed Godhead. But what is remarkable, is the circumstance, that this title of Lord and head over all things is represented as being derived from God the Father; that he was crowned with glory and honour, because he humbled himself, and tasted death for every man; that it is represented as a divine installation, and that in this sense, and on this account, God is called the *head* of Christ. (1 Cor. xi. 3.)

Be it, however, remembered, that it was in the character of the *Saviour of the world* that Christ was thus installed, at a certain time, to be the crowned head of the kingdom of God. The title of Lord over all things was, indeed, derived from God, and conferred upon Christ, in the economy of revelation, as the Messiah of the world; and as this particular dignity was conferred upon Christ for a special purpose, at a certain time, so he will again surrender the kingdom to the Father after the restitution of all things. The same rule,

authority, and power, which Jesus has received from the Father, he shall put down when the end cometh, and he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father. When all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. (1 Cor. xv. 24, 28.)

Christ, however, is Lord and Son, unbounded as to qualification, and unlimited as to time. This dignity has never been conferred upon Christ, nor will it ever be taken from his adorable person. This may already be inferred from the preceding remarks. In the first instance, Christ could not have been raised to his exalted dignity as our blessed Redeemer without causing a suspension of the sovereignty of God the Father, if God had not been present in him in such a manner as to render the administration of the appointed Lord and Head over all things equivalent to the government of the only true God. On the other hand, the peculiar exaltation of Christ, which distinguished him so highly above all men and all creatures, could not fail to intimate a peculiarity in his own blessed person, as the cause of this exaltation.

The Spirit of the Bible ever draws a strict line of demarcation between His humanity and humanity in general. In contradistinction to the general frailty and sinfulness, he appears throughout in the original bloom, vigour, and integrity, as the prototype of our species; and, what is particularly striking, he appears

without sin, without blemish, without spot. This exalted original of humanity gains, however, still more in our admiration, when we are given to understand, that he descended from a higher sphere of pre-existence with the Father, as the only-begotten and well-beloved Son, in whom the Father is well pleased; that from before the foundation of the world, the Father had founded upon him the whole structure of divine revelation, and the entire plan of his purpose, with special reference to the deliverance and happiness of the human race. According to the flesh, he descended from the "*fathers;*" but as the only-begotten of the "*Father,*" he appears in the transcendent position which elevates him over all men and over all things, as the Lord from heaven! Both natures being united in one person, Christ Jesus our Lord is God, blessed for ever, in whom dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily; whilst his glorified humanity will for ever serve to draw all his members after him, and to render the indwelling fulness of the Godhead more and more visible, more and more tangible, more and more communicable, and more and more approachable to his Spouse, his body, the Church.

Whilst, however, his dignity as Lord and Head over all things, in the economy of redemption, is something derived from God,—something conferred upon him at a certain time, for a certain period, and with a certain object in view,—this divine nature, with all its dignity, and with all its glorious majesty, is underived; it is

essentially and eternally his own, and has been brought across the great gulf down into his humanity, from the mysterious heights of his pre-existence with the Father.

Whilst we thus have in Christ the sole image of the invisible God, which in like manner can be seen no where besides; whilst we also possess in his blessed person the great Archetype of humanity, our adorable Saviour further appears in the supereminently exalted character of "*the firstborn of all creation.*" God the Father has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world. The world was founded as the sphere in which the chosen ones should appear holy and without blame before him in love. In Christ they were already present before the foundation of the world, without blemish. Christ alone was the cause of their being chosen, and of the world being founded, the Father having "purposed in himself that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him." Christ, therefore, as the first-born of all creation, could not be a creature. Much rather all that is high and glorious in the department of created existences—in short, the whole fulness of creation, dwelleth in him in so abundant a measure, "*that in all things he might have the pre-eminence;*" for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, and that he should be the heir of all things. He is the first-born of every

creature, because "by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." (Col. i. 16, 17.) Christ in Holy Scripture is never introduced as alone the creator of the universe, but he is always represented as the mediator of creation. As, however, creation pre-supposes nothing existing besides God, the mediator must necessarily be the divine agent. In him, and to him, and by him, were all things created, because in him, as "the beginning of the creation of God," the whole fulness of created life was deposited prior to its existence. (Rev. iii. 14.) And since all creation was commenced through him, and received scope by him, Christ's mediation could naturally be the only means by which the melancholy disorder, which had been introduced by the fall, could again be effectually removed. In the world of matter, and in the world of spirit, he has the pre-eminence. In the world of matter, he is the "first-born of all creation;" in the world of spirit he is the head of the body, the Church, "the first-born from the dead." By him, and in him, and unto him, all things were created; and bearing all things, and upholding the whole system of creation by the word of his power, he is the sole and only legitimate mediator and Saviour of a fallen creation, himself purging our sins. (Heb. i. 2, 3.)

It was the office of a kinsman under the law to redeem that which was sold when the "brother had waxen poor" (Lev. xxv. 25); and it was usual to give a sealed document to the redeemer, to ensure his title to the property which had been thus acquired. Christ Jesus became man, and he, as our kinsman, engaged to redeem the world. Adam, the appointed vice-regent of God upon earth, by transgression had forfeited his right to that creation over which he was to rule in the likeness of his Maker. The claim and title being likewise forfeited by his whole posterity, and because they, in his likeness, all had transgressed, and with him "waxen poor," there was naturally no kinsman to redeem the possession. No one in heaven, or on earth, either under the earth, was able to open this book, and to loose the seals thereof, excepting the "*head over all things*," "*the head of the Church*," the "*Lion of the tribe of Judah*," the *root of David*, the *lamb without blemish*, as it had been slain, prevailed to open the book, to loose the seven seals of the title-deed of the inheritance of the earth, which he undertook to regain for those by whom it had been forfeited!

Our adorable Saviour hence appears before us as the "*Word*," which was in the beginning, without whom was "not any thing made that was made." Without him we can do nothing in religious matters. Without him the Father would do nothing in the revelation of religious truth and the procreation of

religious life. Nothing was revealed, nothing was manifested, nothing was made, and nothing was redeemed, which was not revealed, manifested, made and redeemed through him. From those depths, unutterably deep, which are folded up in the Father's bosom, proceeds every fresh manifestation of religious truth and spiritual life by Christ Jesus, who, being in the Father's bosom, "*declareth unto us.*" It is Christ, whose name is to be blessed in all ages, "*per quem pater loquens omnia facit, qui paterna ad nos loquitur!*" As thoughts are expressed by words, the mysteries which were shut up in the Father's bosom were brought to light through Christ Jesus. In him the thoughts of a heavenly Father are brought home to our hearts, and rendered visible to the eyes of our understanding. Christ as the Word, which was with God, appears throughout as the sole speaker and the only mediator between God and man.

Whilst the Father is pleased to do all things through his well-beloved Son, "it is the Spirit that quickeneth," and "it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth." With the Father and the blessed Son the Spirit is equally active in the opening of the seals of divine revelation and the development of true religion. The worlds were created by the mediatorial operations of the Word, which was from the beginning the bearer of the whole system of divine revelation; and the Spirit is represented already in the creation of matter as quickening the elements of the primeval

chaos. The Spirit is sent forth, and they are created; he taketh away their breath, and the living creatures return to their dust. The Spirit, however, in a special manner, exercised his gracious functions in the province of the economy of revelation, judging and rebuking the world, quickening, and purging, and endowing with special gifts and graces the chosen vessels, by whose instrumentality a fresh supply of religious truth was to be added to the already existing amount of revelation.

As the Holy Ghost unfolded his divine energies in the various stages of the economy of revelation under the Old Testament, so we find that even the incarnation of the Son was dependent upon him. His entrance into the flesh could be effected only by the Spirit's influence. Whilst, however, the agency of the blessed Spirit preceded in a preparatory measure that of the incarnate Saviour of the world, we find again, on the other hand, that he could not fully unfold his gracious operations in the hearts of individuals previously to the organization of the new creation by the instrumentality of our Lord Jesus Christ. "The Holy Ghost was not given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified;" and the Apostles were to tarry in the city of Jerusalem, until they were endued with power from on high. The elements of immortality and life eternal, which were brought to light by the ministry of Christ, were only subsequently impregnated with the quickening, renovating, and regenerating principles of the

Spirit from on high, until man, in his whole existence, was made meet for a living fellowship with the Father and the Son.

The effects of the agency of the Spirit being not merely a hovering about or above the believer, not a mere stirring emotion, not a mere passing religious excitement, nor yet merely an imparting of spiritual gifts and graces; but a new birth, a newness of life, an abiding and indwelling in the heart—man is made a living habitation of the living God, who works all in all through the Son by the Spirit. "Quanto magis Spiritui venerationem debemus, cui non templum facimus, sed sumus. Si ex lignis et lapidibus templum Spiritui juberemur, quia cultus hic soli Deo debetur, clarum esset divinitatis ejus argumentum; nec ergo quanto clarius istud est, quod non templum illi facere, sed nos ipsi esse debemus?" (Augustin.) The Holy Spirit was thus "*poured out*" into the hearts of men, as soon as the whole system of redemption had been duly instituted and organized.

The respective agency of the "*Word*" and of the Spirit of God, as it has been exemplified in the economy of revelation, corresponds also to the natural sense of the terms. The organic sound, as the bearer and revealer of the unknown and hidden ideas of the mind of man, naturally presupposes the activity and energy of *spiritus*. He again precedes the Word, is in the Word, and streams from the Word. From the beginning to the end of the ways of the Almighty—from

the creation of the world to the restitution of all things—the Holy Ghost appears as the breath of the living God. He is the great mover of all that moves, and lives, and has its being; he is the living breath that agitates the ocean of divine life, so as to cause rivers to flow into the multifarious spheres and provinces of life! He is God's own self, as the spirit of man is his own self; and yet he is not the whole index of the nature of God, as the spirit of man is not the whole index of the nature of man. We can as little separate the Godhead from the Spirit of God, as we can separate the spirit of man from humanity. The Spirit of God penetrates the profoundest mysteries of his being, the most secret peculiarities of his nature; and because he searches all things, even the inmost recesses of the Godhead, and contemplates them as they are in reality and truth, "*the Spirit is truth.*" God the Father "*is a spirit;*" he dwelleth in secret, and reveals the things which are secret; he is beyond the reach of contemplation, and known only to himself. The Lord Jesus is "*the Spirit,*" inasmuch as he removes the impenetrable veil, glorifying himself from glory to glory in every one that cometh unto him.

The Lord Jesus hence assumes the same relation to the Holy Spirit, which the Father occupies respecting the Holy Spirit. And again, the Spirit is related to Christ, as the Son is related to the Father. As the Father sends the Son, so Christ sends the Spirit, as also does the Father. As the Son takes of the

things of the Father, so the Spirit takes of the things of Christ. The Spirit bears witness to the Son, and glorifies the Son, as Christ bears witness to the Father, and glorifies the Father. The Spirit was with the Father before he proceeded from the Father, as also was the Son before he went out from the Father. The cause of the proceeding of the Spirit is both in the Father and in the Son, and the object is the glorification of both the Father and the Son. He, however, who is not drawn by the Father, cannot come unto the Son; and the world which receiveth not the witness of the Son, cannot receive the Holy Ghost. And as the Holy Ghost is thus essentially Godhead, he only that is born of the Spirit can enter the kingdom of God. He that is born of the Spirit is born of God, and hath both the Father and the Son. All divine revelation is thus communicated and sealed by the Holy Spirit, so that by him the Father and the Son dwell in the believer; and the believer has fellowship with the Father through the Son by the Holy Ghost. Upon this same ground, blasphemy of the Holy Ghost is the sin unto death, unpardonable in this life, and in the life which is to come. (Mark iii. 28.)

It was, therefore, on the appearance of our LORD JESUS CHRIST that men felt as they had never felt before. A new Spirit had revived in the whole mass, which, prior to his blessed advent, was smitten with anguish and despair. The coming of the Messiah was not

only the centre of the whole development of spiritual life, but it was also the turning point in general history. And as we trace the far and wide shooting rays of the natural light to the sun, as their fountain-head, so Christ is the sole "light of the world," and the bright luminary of its history. All the moral and political changes of by-gone ages seemed pointing to him. And the observation, how all the divers events of the history of men seem to bear upon him, and to fall into the great plan of the Almighty, is calculated to wring the confession from every lip:—"*O Lord, how great are thy works, and thy thoughts are very deep!*" This evidence of the truth of Christianity is, indeed, of a second order, inasmuch as all and every thing within the boundaries of God's providential kingdom must and will agree. The origin of the Roman empire, the rise and progress of the spurious Religion of Mohammed,—in short, all the great and prominent features on the platform of universal history, must and will agree with other events; for how otherwise could the world be a whole? Hence the bearing of the universal history upon the appearance of the Son of man can only be discovered by those who possess the mind, as well as the requisite amount of information, to discern, that not only has all been in accordance with the kingdom of Christ, but that all things have been made *subservient* to the same. We have in Christ the spirit of every type, the soul of every promise, the fulfilment of all hopes, the highest per-

fection of all philosophy, the explanation of all prophecy, the exemplification of all holiness, the key to all the apparent contradictions in the physical, moral, and religious world.

There are many solitary truths without Christ; there have been truths before his manifestation in the flesh, which we have again in Christianity; and there have been also many anxious minds, who feared that the originality of the Christian Religion would be endangered by the discovery of certain analogous expressions or sentiments in other systems of belief. But should we even discover a great many more, the anxiety is utterly without foundation; for in Christ we have united more than has ever been scattered abroad upon the face of the moral or the religious world. Religious truths, such as perhaps have existed beyond the circumference of revealed Religion, are buildings without foundations, members without body, a body without head, waters without a fountain, and planets without a sun.

Our blessed and adorable Lord appears so infinitely great and august, that even Rousseau was so far struck with admiration as to consider it less incomprehensible to suppose, that the Scriptures, which testify of him, should have been forged, than that one individual only should have supplied all the materials for the representation of so supremely excellent and incomparable a person. Nor can we be surprised, that the glorious rays of the distinguished luminary of the

world should have been reflected for thousands of years in symbolical and typical forms, before mankind was sufficiently prepared to bear its ineffable splendour. The veil of symbols is now taken away from the countenance, and, beholding with open faces the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory!

In this all-comprehensive and incomparably exalted position, Christ is particularly represented in the first chapter of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians. The Apostle reminds his readers most affectionately of the manifold spiritual blessings by which they had been made rich, through Christ, in heavenly things. And from hence he opens to their enlightened minds one of the very brightest visions which human faculties are capable of embracing. He reviews the immutable basis upon which the Father has chosen us in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world; that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. In this was already included his having predestinated us unto the adoption of children to himself, by the same Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will. They were seen in Christ holy and without blame already in the bosom of eternity; and when they were created, they were created by the Father, in the beloved, by the beloved, and unto the beloved, as a family of adopted and accepted children.

It is again in the Beloved, that, after the fall of man, we have redemption through his blood, the for-

giveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. And it is the abundant riches of this grace from which the inspired Apostle anticipates the final solution of the profoundest mystery of godliness, according to which God had purposed before the foundation of the world, that in the dispensation of the fulness of time he would gather together into one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him!

This exceeding great scheme of the whole economy of divine revelation, which is likewise so powerfully described in what may be particularly called the "Lord's Prayer," (John xvii.) embraces, therefore, the height and the depth, the length and the breadth of the eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. And the Apostle proceeds to show how this mystery had been already unsealing some of its columns in the history of the world, inasmuch as the Jews (ver. 11, 12) had been *separated* from other nations, according to the original, and ordained beforehand, that they should be to the praise of his glory, and prepared to trust *first* in Christ. This setting apart of Israel, however, was not founded upon any peculiar merit of the nation itself, but it was all done "according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." Not only, however, the Jews, but also the Gentiles were to be added to the chosen priesthood, as soon as they had *heard* the word of truth, *believed* the Gospel of salvation, and been *sealed* with that holy Spirit of promise.

It is, however, necessary that the Spirit of wisdom and revelation enlighten the eyes of the understanding, in order that we may know how rich are the hopes involved in this calling; how rich the harvest of glory which is to result to God in the highest from the inheritance of his saints; and what is the exceeding greatness of his power, which he should reveal in believers according to the energy of his mighty power, which had already shown itself effectual in Christ Jesus, when he was raised from the dead, and set at his right hand far above every principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things *under his feet;* whilst the church is united to him as the body to its head.

Inasmuch, then, as all divine revelation was accomplished through the mediation of Christ, all the works of the Almighty are stamped with the Christian name and the Christian character. This was already felt by Tertullian when he declared "*Anima naturaliter Christiana est.*" We have been tracing not merely the history of the *Religion of Jesus*, which would exhibit the sole act of human deliverance, and comprehend only an important branch of a yet wider scheme of divine revelation; but we have emphatically to do with the *Religion of Christ*, with the *Christian Religion*, which significantly embraces all the religious elements in the Old Testament, as well as every

department of the infinite system of revelation by creation, providence, and redemption. This is the cause why the primitive Christians eschewed the appellation of *Jesuits*, being "first called *Christians* at Antioch." We have, therefore, in the Old as well as in the New Testament, the development and the working of the Religion of the Messiah; or we have, in other words, the development of the *Christian* Religion; and every true believer in the coming Messiah was virtually as well as nominally a *Christian* of the Old Testament dispensation. For this cause St. Paul bowed his knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus "CHRIST," of whom the whole household of the Father in heaven and upon earth is called and named a *Christian household* and a *Christian family!* (Eph. iii. 15.)

10. In reviewing the history of genuine Religion in former ages, the light which we have now gained solves all difficulties and makes everything plain before our eyes. The mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, is at last manifested by the Scriptures of the prophets and the ministry of the Apostles, "according to the commandment of the everlasting God made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." (1 Cor. xvi. 25, 26.) Having the key of the Gospel, we are now able to trace the wisdom and goodness of divine Providence in his household the church. And what a surprising and unearthly discovery is that of the golden thread leading back, through a complicated weft of human actions, to the

most primitive days of the history of man! Like as the individual man is first educated and polished within the narrow sphere of family life before he is considered fit to launch forth into the open sea of the world, so God had prepared him a people; first a *small family*, then a *single nation*, for all-important purposes. *It is one of the greatest mysteries in the history of the world, that a nation exercised the very greatest influence upon the rest of mankind only after it was destroyed and scattered all over the face of the earth; whilst it was comparatively unknown, and remained unnoticed, during the time of its formation and existence!* The people of God's special care abide under the secret cover of his tabernacle. The celebrated ancients were scarcely aware of their existence. It was the destiny of this singular people to *hide* in the first place, and then to *reveal* something uncommon and holy. But when it was revealed the nation lost its importance!

The peculiarity of this people and the ultimate object of so extraordinary a train of providences respecting them, was more or less involved in a mystery. But the eventual solution of the problem throws light upon the whole of the preparatory apparatus. It is shown that it was not partiality which prompted the choice of a peculiar nation, at the expense of the whole world; but in order to appreciate the Old Testament, we require to understand the New. And as the Scriptures of the Hebrews, which contain the records of these

things, have the peculiarity that they are to be read backwards from the right to the left; so the nation itself, with its whole Theocratical constitution, can only be fully understood when we consider them in the light of the Gospel, reading their whole history from the right to the left! Or, to use another simile: as the inspired documents were originally written only with consonants, and therefore only intelligible to some of the Hebrews themselves, the vowels having only been added sometime after the beginning of the Christian era; even so, after the Gospel dispensation supplied the living vowels to the consonants of the Old Testament, "*he may run that readeth it.*" The history of Israel is plain to every Christian.

The chosen nation, which was to be a barrier against the torrent of idolatry that seemed to overwhelm mankind, was small and insignificant in comparison with other nations, yet it was an instrument by which God's purpose was made to stand. If we suppose the case, that no such nation had existed, everything would have taken a perfectly different course. Idolatry would have overrun mankind, and retained its cruel sway up to the present hour. It might have changed its forms and systems ten thousand times, but to rise above the level of superstition and infidelity would always have been beyond its power. The small link, however, in the chain of divine providence, not only opposed the disease in its rapid strides over the face of the globe, but so connected the development of true Religion

from the commencement with the history of the world, as to render it of the utmost consequence in the event. *If we remove this link, we have a purely idolatrous world without the least exception; a world dark and irreligious, with no element which could serve as a foundation for the happiness and salvation of mankind.* The history of Israel, considered in this light, eclipses in importance the history of all other nations of antiquity together; for it contains elements, and is the record of events, which were intensely important to the whole family of man.

The generalization of the promised blessing, however, could not be effected until the whole was so prepared, as to allow its introduction under the most favourable prospects, and when the want of it was felt to be most urgent and imperative. The affairs of the world were at the time of Christ exactly in such a position, that if Christianity had not appeared, the world would have inevitably fallen a prey to the tyrannical yoke of Pagan superstition, or Pagan infidelity, because the constitution which had hitherto served as a safe barrier to its becoming general was abolished with the national independence and the Theocratical apparatus of the Israel of God. The nation, in refusing the Messiah, had thrown away their whole dignity; they had forfeited the right to the possession of the land and to national independence in general; they had for ever cast from them their prosperity and happiness. With the Messiah, they

rejected Jehovah also. The Son came unto his own, and his own received him not. By this act they had humbled themselves *beneath* the level of those nations, from whom they were so honourably distinguished, inasmuch as they were now made an object of scorn and derision. In this degraded condition they could no longer be the salt of the earth, and oppose the influence of Pagan idolatry.

If, therefore, something had not been substituted for the once efficient constitution of Israel, Paganism now would have stood unrestrained, and obtained the supremacy for itself. Christianity, however, not only entered as an efficient bar to obstruct the influence of Paganism, but administered comfort and peace to the Pagan world, which was even then writhing in agony and despair. Christianity could make its way with comparative ease into the heathen world, as it was no longer shackled by the peculiarity which prevented Judaism from proselytizing amongst the Gentiles. The object of the separation being now gained, the dam was required no more, and every effort to uphold it any longer was against the whole scope of the preparatory institution. "Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: *but they put new wine into new bottles*, and both are preserved." When mankind was in its childhood, and spake as a child, and understood as a child, and thought as a child, Religion condescended

to its low estate; but when mankind had become a man, Religion also "put away childish things." A right conception of the relation between the Old and the New Testament will preclude the expectation of any other dispensation before the second advent of Christ.

Judaism has been standing still for 1800 years; not a spark of spiritual blessing has it been able to communicate to the rest of humanity, since it would have no part in the great blessings which were promised to their patriarchs. And the nation wanders about like a ghost upon the face of the earth, without country, without king, without prophet, without sacrifice, without Pagan images, and without the ephod of the high-priest, without Urim and Thummim; without Teraphim or family idols; and the true meaning of that remarkable passage in Hosea iii. 4, is: "They shall be neither Jews nor Gentiles, and shall have neither a true nor yet a false sanctuary." The leaven of idolatry is indeed cleansed, but they are no longer Israelites; for what is an Israelite without temple and sacrifice, without priest and without prophets, without a Theocratical constitution, and without Messiah? They have zeal for God, but without knowledge. They have Moses and the prophets, but, notwithstanding, they are blind;" for until this day remaineth the same veil, untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament. "When Moses is read, the veil is upon their hearts." They imagine to serve the God of their fathers, but

with the Son, "*The Lord our Righteousness,*" they have rejected the Father also. And as this nation stood singular in the midst of other nations in the days of old, so they appear singular in these latter days. Scattered all over the face of the earth, yet unmixed; persecuted and oppressed, yet undiminished, they preserve their nationality without a native land, and without rites, they have a Religion. There being no eternal curse in this world, and the gifts of God being without repentance, we may yet hope better things of this remarkable nation.

One thing, however, seems to be sufficiently clear from their former character and their present condition, and that is, that they have fulfilled their destiny as a nation. How different was their situation before the Christian era, in comparison with their present position! Israel had been again and again under the oppressive hand of foreign powers; but how could Jehovah better show that he would spare this nation for some specific purpose, than by delivering them from the hand of their enemies against all human probability, and by taking them again under his special protection? Thus they were delivered from a state of servitude in the "house of bondage," which had lasted no less than four hundred years. And when they were vexed during a period of another four hundred years by the Philistines and similar nations, he aided them from time to time by giving them victory over their enemies, until they were at length entirely deli-

vered from these petty annoyances under David. When, at a still later period, dangers and oppression threatened to come from the powerful nations of the East, God saved his people by allowing one of these powers to swallow the other. The Assyrians were humbled by the Chaldeans; and the Babylonian empire again was destroyed by the Medes and by the Persians; and it was under this latter reign, that the captive Jews in Babylon were allowed to return to their own land. The efforts which were made by the Syrian kings in later days, especially by the bitter enemy of the Jewish Religion, Antiochus Epiphanes, were confounded by the spirited heroism of the house of the Maccabees; whilst the triumphant eagles of Pompey and Anthony were to pass harmless by Jerusalem, until they had filled up their measure of sin in crucifying the Lord of Glory. And when the holy city was become a carcase after that memorable event, the Roman eagles were again gathered together to execute the judgments of the Almighty.

Since that time the nation has smarted under the unmitigated curse, which has followed them to every land whither they have been scattered. The power which had been made instrumental in the hand of God to visit the sins of his people, has long ago fallen into decay; and several new empires and kingdoms have arisen upon the ruins of the colossal power of ancient Rome. But amongst all the emperors and kings who have since arisen in Asia and in Europe

there has as yet been found no Cyrus, whose spirit was moved to aid the captives in returning to the land of their fathers. And amongst all the great men of the Jews themselves, there may be Rothschilds, but no second Zerubbabel has yet been discovered, who has succeeded to take the lead of his brethren in such a homeward movement! According to the express prediction of our adorable Messiah, whom they have given up to the Gentiles, Jerusalem and its inhabitants "shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled." "And they also, if they abide not in unbelief, shall be graffed in: for God is able to graff them in again;" not, perhaps, into "Jerusalem," but "into their own olive tree," which is the true Israel of God; the church of Christ now being the good olive tree: and as it is not unfrequent in nature that the engrafted sprig far outgrows the original stock in circumference, so also the Israel from amongst the Gentiles has far outgrown the Israel of God from amongst the Israel of the flesh!

In reviewing the very remarkable history of the Israel of God, we confess there was something natural, we had almost said justifiable, in the pride of Jewish patriotism; for never had those whom history had most gorgeously blazoned in the heraldry of human achievement and ancestral glory—never had they such marvellous honours to boast of! All the conquests of ambition and earthly renown are not to be compared with that wreath of splendour which sat upon the men

of Judah! There is nought in all that is recorded of the sages and warriors or the prowess of other lands that so irradiates their names as that which irradiates the land of the Hebrews. Theirs were the prophets and patriarchs and holy men of God! Apart from piety, there is that of the poetic and picturesque about them which has furnished writers with the most pleasing delineations of character and costume. The traveller whose feelings have been elevated by what he saw in the classic territories of Greece and Rome, and in Egypt, will always confess that a deeper awe was filling his mind as he trod the sacred land of Judea. Israel was a nation selected by God, instructed by his prophets, visited not only by the angels of heaven, but even by the Son of God. Our Lord sprang out of Judah; salvation is of the Jews. To them belonged the glory of this high and heavenly relationship, and with their fathers were those covenants made which enveloped the great spiritual destinies of the human race. Paul felt much of it when he made mention of the Israelites as a people to whom pertained the *adoption*, and the *glory*, and the *covenants*, and the *giving of the law*, and *the service of God*, and *the promises;* and he finished the stately climax of their honours and national glories with what he deemed the brightest of their ensigns, *that from them as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever.* (Rom. ix. 1—5.) They were indeed the most illustrious nation on the face of the world. There

shines upon them a glory from on high; and all that the heroic and classic page has enrolled of other nations cannot stand a most distant comparison. The daughter of Sion was a crown of glory and a royal diadem in the hand of the Lord; Hephzibah she was called, for his delight was in her; and as a bridegroom rejoiceth over his bride, even so rejoiced the Lord over Sion. But, alas! "*Ichabod, the glory is departed.*" The ways of Sion do mourn, because none come to their solemn feasts; all her gates are desolate, her priests sigh, her virgins are afflicted, and she, in the bitterness of her soul, is sitting in the dust, covered with mourning as a widow, and giving vent to her grief in words of lamentation: "*The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me!*" Many were their provocations and temptations in the wilderness, and many were their sufferings and captivities; but since He came unto his own, and his own received him not—since they have rejected Jesus, and with him rejected the glory of their nation—since they have crucified the Lord of glory, and slain the Captain of our salvation—since they have called his blood to be upon them and upon their children—since they have neglected so great a salvation, and trodden underfoot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing—since that time, *Ichabod, the glory is departed!* They are banished from his presence, and scattered abroad among all nations as living monuments of his holy anger, to become a

reproach in the face of the world, a proverb and byword among all nations. He poured out his fury, and kindled a fire in Sion, which devoured the very foundations thereof; and more than seventeen hundred years the unhappy Jew wanders through the world, *without country and without king, without prophet and without temple, without altar and without sacrifice, without God and without Messiah*, exclaiming as he wanders, "The Lord hath forsaken me, my Lord hath forgotten me!"

Whilst in Jerusalem, the writer attended one of the Jewish anniversaries in commemoration of the destruction of the temple of Jehovah. He went and found them sitting on the ground, on purpose to mourn and weep over the sacred dust of their ancient glory, each holding a candle in one hand, and the book of the Prophet's Lamentations in the other. One of the Elders in Israel began chanting these Lamentations in the holy and expressive language of the original. Each note was swollen with a sigh, if not broken by a sob; and the mourning congregation gave way to their smothered groans at certain particular passages. There he observed, amongst others, a little boy heartily sobbing; there another little boy buried his face in the lap of his father, and the eyes of both father and son were literally flowing with tears! An old Rabbi arose from the weeping assembly, to open a most pathetic discourse by lamenting the melancholy event which was commemorated by the anniversary. His tears flowed fast, and rolling down his face mingled

with his beard, which was white as snow. Many of the weeping congregation soon began to sob aloud and to veil their faces. "Where is the beauty of the holy city Jerusalem, our mother?" asked the old Rabbi; "where our temple, and the token of the presence of our God? Where is our high-priest?" "We have cast them away through our transgressions!" was his reply. When at last he opened a chest towards the Temple mountain, containing the Law of Moses, and showed the meagre shadow of their ancient glory to the congregation, praying for all Israel in Jerusalem and abroad, "*they all wept with a loud voice.*" Sion said, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me!"

11. If it be asked why Christianity, with its inestimable blessings, appeared at so late a period of the world, we might indeed answer to similar queries with Boniface, when he said, "Why not rejoice rather when we again behold the glorious sun after the heavens have so long been covered with clouds?" There are, however, inquisitive minds which are not satisfied with a similar answer. And we find, indeed, already in the first centuries of the Christian church, that whilst Pagan philosophers could not possibly deny the excellency of the Christian Religion in many respects, they opposed it on the ground of its appearing so late! In their opposition to the primitive defenders of the faith, they maintained that if the Christian Religion were indeed so excellent and perfect, it would have

been unjust on the part of the Deity to withhold it from man till so late a period; and that if God did not commit an act of injustice to the previous generations in withholding it, it could not be supremely excellent in itself, nor could it be considered by any means indispensably necessary to the happiness of mankind. This idea naturally appeared very plausible to the Pagan mind. Being both ignorant of the history of divine revelation, and strangers to the beneficial effects which it produces, the Pagan sages could have no sound notion of its character and tendency, nor could it hence be expected that they would be able to comprehend the principles upon which spiritual life in general is developed. They were, moreover, naturally inclined to ascribe arbitrary and capricious motives to the acts of their gods, and were totally in the dark as to an allwise Providence, which balances the history of the universe upon the laws of righteousness, benevolence, and true holiness.

It was, according to their views, the privilege of the Deity to act freely, without reference to those merciful and just motives which in the Christian mind are inseparable from the character of God. The Deity, according to their views, was able to communicate any Religion to any people, at any period; and because the most perfect Religion stood first in rank as to its real and intrinsic value, they considered it natural that God would reveal it from the commencement of days. That there is some truth in this, cannot be

doubted; nor can it be difficult to infer from our previous remarks, that the *Christian Religion* was being revealed from the very beginning of time. But this connexion between the beginning and the end of the history of true Religion was a point which was beyond the knowledge and comprehension of the Pagan philosophers.

Our previous sketch of the history of Religion, it is hoped, contains a copious reply to the above objection, as regards the late appearance of Christianity. Already, in the province of animal or vegetable life, we observe certain laws and principles of a peculiar kind. In the whole sphere of the administration of Divine providence, nothing is done or perfected *at once*, in the ordinary course of events; but every thing passes, by a slow but sure process, through several distinct periods and stages of its existence to maturity. No essential part can be omitted in the ways, nor overleaped in the works of the Almighty. The very history of the creation stamped these immutable laws upon every province of nature. Now, we observe the very same thing in intellectual, moral, or religious matters; and as the power which controls both departments is the same, it would be highly strange if it were otherwise. As mankind had been formed and fashioned by God with this very same peculiarity in nature and disposition, it would be unreasonable, and involve a singular act of miscalculation, to suppose, that God would have no regard to this peculiarity in man, but

anticipate any one of the future stages of revelation. That Christ did not appear before the fulness of time, was therefore founded in the nature of the history of man, and in the character of divine revelation; both were controlled "*according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.*"

If it be, however, true, that in the world of matter, and in the world of spirit, nothing is done at once; and if we give, for instance, from five hundred to a thousand years to the growth of an oak; we may, perhaps, have sufficient liberality to allow to the growth of genuine Religion a few thousand years, without being in the least surprised. The stately plant of true Religion, which the heavenly Father has planted, demanded some time to be reared in a most unfavourable climate, and amidst the wild thorns and thistles which cover the breadth and length of the world. And it is even because its branches are to reach into a future *eternity*, and make it replete with ineffable beatitude, that we cannot be surprised at the apparently slow progress by which it has advanced. We observe, in the animal and vegetable sphere of life, that a rapid growth involves always a rapid decay. The animal and the plant that grow most rapidly, carry already in themselves the germs of an equally rapid decay. *What a duration, therefore, does the slow progress of God's kingdom imply, if we may judge from analogy!* What a great harvest of salvation and glory shall eternally be reaped from this tree of life! If it be true, that

Religion could not rush into the world, in its most perfect form, without causing confusion and misapprehension on the part of man, it must be likewise true, that it appeared most seasonably when it appeared. It is hoped, that its seasonable appearance has been already made plain in the previous chapter. We have seen that there was no disposition on the part of man to receive the Saviour of the world prior to his advent, but that there was both a preparedness, and a feeling of paramount necessity for his appearance, when he did appear. Let us, however, once more take a cursory view of the all-important subject under consideration. In glancing at the religious, moral, and political condition of the world before the appearance of Christianity, we observe throughout the symptoms of *decay*.

Amongst the celebrated Greeks, philosophy had undermined the whole fabric of the national system of religious belief; and the philosophical commentations of the later systems of Grecian wisdom, which were calculated to support the Mythological fables, could after all do but little to respite their poor existence. The religious assemblies, which united the nation in the exercise of religious ceremonies, were abolished, upon the loss of liberty and independence. The most celebrated and most frequented temples were robbed of their treasures, and the oraculous fame which some of them possessed, was rapidly on the decline. The final silence of the oracles themselves was owing to these natural causes, and might be looked upon, at the

same time, as one of the providential signs of that time. Other temples again were utterly destroyed in time of war; and such of the most splendid works of art as had escaped the ravages of destruction, were carried away! The celebrated Mysteries also, which, during the breaking up of the national creed, had served as a refuge for some of the more serious people, had likewise sadly degenerated into mysteries of iniquity. Religion, therefore, was confined to obscure family devotions, which were performed according to such traditional fragments as had escaped the danger of falling into oblivion. The national creed, therefore, maintained a very precarious existence, and it was sure ere long to give place to some other form of superstition or infidelity.

Amongst the Romans the state of Religion was in nowise better than it was amongst the Greeks. Riches and power had led the nation to look, on the one hand, with contempt upon the national deities; and, on the other hand, the luxury in which they revelled induced an effeminate weakness and aversion to more serious concerns in the best members of the nation. Both, however, the scepticism regarding the national creed, and the extreme weakness in matters of public business, were to be covered with the cloak of an Epicurean philosophy. From this general corruption of the nation, not even the better part of the people remained free. And even Cicero,—from whose letters we are enabled to gather an insight into the Atheistical

spirit which animated the higher classes of his day, and who endeavours in his philosophical writings to inculcate some of the leading articles of natural Religion,—how sceptical, and even how scornful, are not, at times, his remarks respecting the institutions of the Roman Religion and its practices? And if Horace confesses of himself, "*Parcus Deorum cultor et infrequens*," we may well consider it to have been the general character of the whole nation at that day! With what ridicule did Ovid treat the whole *chronique scandaleuse* of the Grecian Mythology! And how satirical were the observations of Persius and Juvenal upon the religious practices and manners of their cotemporaries!

Pagan morality is at all times of a very doubtful character; but it was to be expected, that, with this decline of the religious systems, the moral degeneracy would be simultaneous. The Greeks had always been far in advance of the Romans, as to their early development in a civil, scientific, and religious point of view; they seemed, also, to distinguish themselves by their subsequent demoralization! As the Greeks, however, formed very soon part and parcel of the Roman empire, and, therefore, shared in the casualties of the latter, we shall proceed to a few remarks upon the moral state of the Romans about the time of our Saviour's advent, confining ourselves to the picture which had been drawn by the masterhand of the Roman historians, Sallust, Tacitus, and Suetonius.

After Antiochus was subdued, and Carthage destroyed, all the riches of the world seemed to accumulate in Rome. The mind of the nation seemed kindled with an ardent desire for money, for honour, and power. This thirst after wealth and power became soon manifest, for instance, in the jealousy and corruptibility of the chief leaders of the army, and in the fact, that seats in the senate were capable of being purchased. The same passions soon gendered civil wars, which were remarkable for treachery, cruelty, and perfidiousness of every description. Corruption was becoming more and more apparent in every relation of life; and little was attempted by the emperors to stem the progress of depravity,—yea, they themselves might be looked upon as a compendious index of the state of the nation, being distinguished by despotism, cruelty, and vice of every shape and colour. In the wives and daughters of the Emperors we behold the deepest degradation of the female character amongst the nation. The ordinary symptoms of the celebrated Roman *Jurisprudence* at that age, were false accusations on the part of the accusers, perjury and treachery on the part of the witnesses, fear and corruptibility on the part of the judges. The corruption of the capital spread like a moral plague over the several provinces, and with such rapidity and power, that Tacitus, who was by no means a credulous man, prognosticated, from the symptoms which appeared in every direction, the approaching destruction of the Empire! He gave it as his convic-

tion, that the gods were no longer concerned as to the preservation of the Empire, but that they meditated its punishment.

As a shrewd politician, who calculated from the external phenomena of the age, he was perfectly right in his judgment. Those who looked yet deeper than himself, not only anticipated woe and destruction of the sinking fabric of the Empire, but likewise expected, that, at a period when moral depravity had reached its acme, a *new order of things* was at hand; and they expressly declared their belief in the approach of an extraordinary and mighty deliverer from the East —expectations to which we have already adverted in the previous chapter.

As regards the Jewish nation, we recollect that amongst them, also, every thing was indicative of decay, and that it was consequently drawing near to the time when the old promises and prophecies were to be finally fulfilled. Upon the return from the exile, the Holy City was restored, with its temple; but all was done on a very reduced scale in comparison with what it was in former days. The people were disheartened, and the latter prophets were the more active to comfort them, by opening the prospects of a speedy appearance of the Messiah. Whilst his chariot, however, tarried in coming, they enjoyed political quietude as long as they were under the protection of the Persian power. But soon they were again troubled, first by Egypt, and then by the Syrians. The opposition which

they met from the latter being of a religious character, it raised the energy of the broken-hearted nation once more so far as to maintain their independence for some time longer. Yet, want of harmony in the ruling dynasty of the otherwise brave house of the Maccabees, and feuds between brothers, offered an opportunity to the Romans to meddle with the concerns of the nation; and from this period all prospect of retaining their national independence seemed to be lost, until Augustus at last placed a stranger of Idumea to rule over them. The *sceptre had departed from the house of Judah.* More and more ominous became the symptoms in the character and the reign of Herod, in the worthlessness of his sons, and in the rebellious spirit of the people, that the end of the Jewish State was at hand.

Perfectly analogous to the political confusion was the state of Religion in Israel. The nation had been split for some time into two distinct sects, which, though differing greatly from each other, were yet both calculated to corrupt both the theory and the practice of sound Religion. When the Sadducee, as a true Materialist, denied the Spirit, mocked at the idea of "life and immortality," and considered riches and pleasure as the highest good which man could attain—his maxim was as dangerous to Religion and morality amongst the chosen people as the Epicurean principles were amongst the Greeks and the Romans. When the Pharisee, on the other hand, amalgamated his doubtful traditions with the dogmas of the Theocratical

constitution, and increased its ceremonial precepts with a multitude of his own inventions, he fell from the pure Religion of his forefathers into a worship of deadening forms, which neglects the weightier matters of the law.

When Christ appeared, the measure of the sins of the world was full; his appearance, therefore, was seasonable in the extreme. God healed not mankind, however, previous to the fulness of the time, because the tree of corruption was to bring forth all its deadly fruit. Christ appeared not earlier, because, on the one hand, salvation was to be prepared for mankind, and on the other, mankind was to be prepared for salvation. At the time of the fall of man, sin had taken root in his own free will; it had been embraced by an act which was entirely his own. Hence sin could not be remedied by a sudden blow; nor yet was it possible, under these circumstances, that salvation should appear unprepared. It was man's own free choice to surrender himself to the charms and miseries of sin; he could, therefore, by no means be forced to accept deliverance from its curse. He was to act, in this point, with the same moral liberty; and in order to enable him to stretch forth his hands unto God, he was gradually to be educated, and led into the way, by which he was most likely to feel and to confess his utter need of a divine Saviour. *Redemption was probably most acceptable to the world after it had passed through a lengthened period of instruction, pro-*

bation, correction, deception, and struggle. Ungodliness was to ripen before it could be effectually cured. Sin was to assume, under the forbearance of God, all its hateful and hideous forms. Man should deeply feel and taste the bitterness of living without God in this world, and without hope as to the world to come. When the fulness of time was come, Christ came unto his own, but his own, as a nation, received him not. *Much less*, indeed, would, therefore, his advent have been hailed, had he appeared immediately after the first fall of man. His appearance could have told much less upon the wild generation of transgressors at the beginning of days. The effects, also, which might have been produced by his advent on the woman's seed, at that early period, would have been again disappearing very fast. The new wine of the element of sin, which had been poured into the heart of man, was to have its time of fermentation. Man started upon a new road when he fell, and this new path was that of independence, self-sufficiency, and pride. He would use all his efforts to create a fountain of happiness independent of his Lord and Maker. Under these circumstances, it would have become necessary that Christ should appear after every fresh fall, and after every fresh attempt on the part of man to redeem himself.

We know, from melancholy experience, that it was possible for man to fall in his state of infancy. Salvation could, however, be brought before him with the hope of its being favourably received, only upon having

advanced towards a sober state of maturity, and completed his eccentric course of "*riotous living.*" If Christ had appeared at any previous period of the history of man, there might have arisen many a doubt in the mind of a self-sufficient world in after ages, whether, after all, it would not have been in their power to reap the honour of having been their own Saviours, provided God had delayed sending his Son. From the above remarks, as well as from our previous sketch of the historical development of true Religion, it will be plain to all the world, that Christ appeared "*in the fulness of time, born of a woman;*" that the Gospel was preached when "*the time was fulfilled;*" and that "there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who *gave himself a ransom for all; a testimony to the world at a particularly appropriate season.*" (See 1 Tim. ii. 6, in the original.)

12. Righteousness, immortality, and life eternal, have thus been brought to light through the Gospel. The Holy Sacraments, as the most effectual means of grace, have been instituted. The Holy Spirit, leading into all truth, has been poured forth. The ministry of the word of life has been established. The Church of the living God, as the ground and pillar of truth, has been founded upon the Rock of Ages. Divine revelation has been deposited in the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make man wise unto salvation. And the leaven of the Gospel is at work amongst the

whole tribe of the family of man. The preaching of the Gospel of peace was supported in the Apostolical age by signs and wonders, "the Lord working with them." When the Church was founded, the miraculous demonstrations of the power of God were discontinued, and superseded in the "latter days" by the operations of the Spirit through the ordinary means of grace. It is one of the principles upon which the Almighty rules the universe, never to waste any portion of his energy and power; and of the working of this principle we have abundant evidence in God's providential kingdom, as well as in the kingdom of grace.

Since the time that the Church of Christ, in her appearance and in her operations, assumed the character of a miracle, which is single in its kind, and unprecedented as to its effect, Christianity has thrown away the crutches of those extraordinary signs and wonders by which it was supported in the days of comparative weakness and infirmity. The Church, being in possession of all the necessary means of grace, aspires no longer after the extraordinary illumination which was necessary until the whole apparatus of the new dispensation was duly organized. There are miracles and wonders performed now as they were in the primitive days of the Church; but the demonstrations of the power and of the Spirit have retired, as might have been expected, from the province of *matter* to that of the *Spirit*. The quiet and unobtrusive miracles of illumination, justification, and

sanctification amongst sinners,—the marvellous energy of the Holy Spirit in converting, guiding, and elevating the souls of immortal creatures who have been dead in trespasses and sins,—the making heralds of "babes," of "fools" teachers of the world,—the fact of the world that lieth in wickedness being changed into a house of God and a holy temple in the Lord,—the conversion of sinners into Saints of a glorious Church, not having spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing—these are signs which to an enlightened mind appear far greater than all the healing of the sick, or the raising of the dead to life. The faith of the Christian is to overcome the world, "for whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world."

It was, however, not the object to bring about a quick consummation of the blessings of the Gospel on the very largest scale. As all along the previous history of true Religion, so, also, from the commencement of the Christian era, everything has its time. The general spread of true Religion, and the sudden disappearance of Pagan darkness, could not yet be expected. Paganism remained still powerful in the world, but even the continuance of its monstrous enormities was calculated to endear the Religion of Christ to the Israel of God, whilst, on the other hand, a wide door was opened to the Pagans themselves. It was, on the whole, a position which Christ himself has led us to expect for a long time respecting the spread of true Religion. We find a mixture of tares and

wheat, which were to ripen together towards the great day, for which all other days were made—the day of a general cleansing, the day of final retribution. In the meantime, the tares are growing with the wheat. But the time is coming when every plant which the heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted out. "As the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of the world." At that day it shall come to pass, that the dead shall rise, and be judged according to their works. But as the separation of the body and soul was the wages of sin, so their re-union in the resurrection shall appear as the fruit of redemption. For if the soul of man had no power to preserve its own body from decay, much less will it be in its power to restore a corrupted tabernacle, and to make a serviceable instrument for most important purposes. Christ being risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept, all shall be made alive in him.

"The body of the believer is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, and it is raised a spiritual body." The Christian hence *looks for the Saviour from heaven*, who shall change his vile body, "that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

It is remarkable how certain important Scriptural

truths are frequently seized upon by individuals of an enthusiastic temperament, and "held in unrighteousness." Many, for instance, have been led to regard with suspicion and dislike the doctrines of free grace, because they have been so frequently perverted to promote the unhallowed purposes of antinomian licentiousness. While others, observing how often personal holiness has been substituted as the ground of a sinner's acceptance for the alone scriptural basis on which a sinner's hope of salvation can rest—even the blessed Redeemer's righteousness—have been led to embark in an unhallowed crusade against those very truths which constitute the ultimate design and highest glory of the doctrines of the cross; and in the ardour of their zeal to humble and destroy the presumptuous claims of self-righteousness, they engage in an open warfare against that holiness without which no man shall see God!

But there is perhaps no doctrine of Scripture which has suffered more severely from the habit of confounding together human error with divine truth, than the all-important, comforting, and most glorious doctrine of the second coming of the Son of God. This doctrine, from which the Christian believer is directed to draw the most animating motives for watchfulness, zeal, holiness, and consolation, has been at various times, and never, perhaps, more remarkably than in our own day, so mixed up with startling heresies and wild schemes of millennarian prophecy, that many sober-minded Christians have felt alarm. And what has

been the result? While steering their course amidst surrounding perils, in their eagerness to escape from the whirlpool of *extravagance*, many have struck against the rock of *indifference* on this momentous subject. Because one class have given the second coming of the Son of God an undue prominence, placing it as the *principal* figure in the foreground of every representation of divine truth, and grafting upon it heretical opinions or speculative dreams, the other class have unduly depreciated its importance, and neglected an essential portion of a Christian's privileges and a Christian's hopes. Because the one class have forgotten that it is not given unto them to know the times and the seasons, in venturing to predict the exact period of the Redeemer's promised advent, others have neglected to fasten their fond and steadfast gaze on this glorious object, and forgotten that suddenly as the lightning's flash, unwelcome to the world, as a thief in the night, the day of the Lord will come, and that blessed are those servants of his whom when he cometh he shall find watching!

Ours is pre-eminently a time of distress of nations, with *perplexity;* in which the saints of the Most High are admonished to be patient, to stablish their hearts, when crowding signs in heaven and earth seem to betoken the drawing nigh of the Lord's coming. If we were asked to describe the general tone of feeling that pervades all classes and characters in our day, could we find terms more strictly appropriate, more

painfully correct, than to call it a time "*of distress of nations, with perplexity,*" and a period when "men's hearts are failing them for fear, and for looking for those things that are coming upon the earth?" Whether derived from the convulsions of the political or the excitement of the religious world; whether derived from personal observation or from the page of prophecy; is there not gone abroad a general expectation that we are on the eve of some mighty change, some tremendous catastrophe in the history of our race!

A spirit of infidelity has been shed forth upon this our present generation; the mighty conflict between the powers of light and the powers of darkness is growing more and more intense; can we then look upon the restless movements of that spirit of revolution which, under the spurious name of reform, is walking through the earth, uprooting things long established, overturning things that seemed immovable, threatening to rend asunder the very framework of society, to dissolve the entire fabric of civilized government; can we observe those mighty heavings, and that universal process of fermentation in the various elements of the political, religious, moral, and social relations of life, without being impressed with the solemn reflection that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh?

We would not indeed attempt with presumptuous hand to pull aside the thick veil of intentional obscurity

which God himself has flung over the *precise period* of the approaching advent of his well-beloved Son. "*The secret things belong unto the Lord our God.*" But the same lips which at one time reproved, saying, "It is not for you to know the times and the seasons, which the Father has put in his own power," at another uttered those words of rebuke: "Ye hypocrites! ye can discern the face of the sky, and can ye not discern the signs of the times?"

Now, as regards the second coming of the Son of God, we observe how it is exhibited in the scheme of the Gospel as the Christian's most blessed hope. It has been at all times the comfort of his church. When he ascended on high, his flock was comforted amidst all the sorrows of separation by the assured promise and realized prospect of his *second coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.* And surely if this—and not so much the prospect of so soon being reunited to the ascended Saviour by their own approaching death—if this was the message sent from heaven to stir up the Apostles' zeal and to soothe their sorrow, it must have derived with us an increase of suitableness proportioned to the number of years which have brought us so much nearer the accomplishment of the glorious prophecy! Again; the Apostle admonished his churches to patience, and administered consolation under bereavements, upon very different grounds from what we are apt to do under similar circumstances. Would we comfort a

mourning child of God, who is sorrowing for some beloved object that has fallen asleep in Jesus? Do we not endeavour to comfort by reminding him that the beloved one has escaped from all the storms of life's tempestuous sea, and reached the haven of eternal rest? Now we will not depreciate the sweet and precious comfort which is contained in the assurance of the immediate blessedness of those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. Yet this is not strictly the apostolical mode of administering consolation under such bereavement. The inspired Apostle directs his Thessalonian mourners, not to the immediate blessedness of those who had fallen asleep in Jesus, not to the prospect of a speedy reunion, but to the promised *day of the appearing of the Son of God!* How does St. Peter comfort the Christians to whom he wrote, who though greatly rejoicing in the prospect of the inheritance incorruptible and undefiled reserved for them in heaven, were yet for a season in heaviness through manifold temptations? He tells them that it was the gracious design of their heavenly Father, in their mercifully appointed afflictions, that the trial of their faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory, at the *appearing of Jesus Christ.* Again; amidst fiery trials they were to rejoice, inasmuch as they were partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory should be revealed, they might be glad also with exceeding joy! Again; the believers are admonished

to be patient amidst suffering and affliction; to stablish their hearts when driven by some fierce tempest of woe and sorrow, *because the coming of the Lord draweth nigh!*

The resurrection of Christ pointed already to the fact, that it is only the future resurrection of the body to life at the second coming of our Lord, which will fully qualify our human nature for the enjoyment of the pleasures which are at God's right hand for evermore. The resurrection of our bodies, to use our Lord's significant expression, will be a true *Palingenesis*, a *regeneration* and *second birth*, which will introduce our whole existence into eternal communion with the eternal Father, by the eternal Son, through the blessed Spirit. (Matt. ix. 28.) As the "*first-born of the creation*," Christ was the exalted head of the universal kingdom of the Almighty. As Christ was "the first-born of creation" in the old world, he is the head of the world which is to come, as "*the first-begotten of the dead.*" All that shall have passed when the hour of the general resurrection shall be announced by the trump of the archangel, will be of a merely introductory character. It will form the birth-day of the ransomed church, the grand beginning of the endless futurity of a never-ending eternity; the solemn awakening to the realities of the pure pleasures of heaven.

Can we feel surprise that the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the *manifestation* of the sons

of God? As yet they are not manifest as a body. Some fell asleep in Jesus, and are present with the Lord. Others are members of the church militant here on earth. Again, others are born in the flesh, but they are not yet born in the Spirit. And finally, although they are the sons of God, it doth not yet appear what they shall be; but we know, that when Christ shall appear, they will be like him. They are not manifest. Their *life is hid with Christ* in God. When Christ their life shall appear, then shall they also appear with him in glory! In perfect harmony with the all embracing character of the economy of revealed Religion, the creature itself also shall be delivered from the *bondage of corruption*, into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Nature shall put off her old garments, and rise, as it were, from the grave, by which it was held in the bondage of corruption. The creature was made for eternal purposes of love and goodness, and it was directly involved in the destiny of man, to lead it forward to that glorious consummation in the likeness of his Maker. But, instead of replenishing the earth with blessing and peace, he brought it into the bondage of corruption, and drew down upon it the curse of heaven. What was neglected and interrupted then, was to be made good by the second Adam, the Lord from heaven. The Son of Man had already upon earth cured some of the wounds, soothed some of the sorrows, and wiped off some of the tears of a creation, which was

travailing "in pain together until now." Wherever the Son of Man placed his foot, there was produced blessing and salvation to man and the "creature!" But all these blessings were only *samples* of the final and great Jubilee of the world. For the "creature" shall not groan, wait, and travail in vain; the Lord will create a new heaven, and a new earth! As the creation sympathised most painfully in the sufferings and groans of humanity, and was in expectation with them of the final deliverance, so also it sympathises in the dawning of the liberty of the sons of God. We read in the correspondence of the celebrated Göthe with Bettina, "When, in silent solitude, I enter the sanctuary of nature, during the stillness of night, it is to me as if creation implored me for deliverance. Very often have I had the sensation that nature entreated me for something, with an accent most melancholy and plaintive, and it broke my heart not to comprehend what it was she desired." Göthe, the illustrious poet of Germany, could not comprehend the language of nature; but St. Paul, the inspired Apostle of our Lord Jesus Christ, interpreted the groans of the suffering "creature." The connexion of the expectation of creation with the redemption of the body of the sons of God, is clearly shown forth in Holy Scripture. (Rom. viii.) There will be a restitution of all things upon the grandest scale. When the children of Israel went forth out of the bondage of Egypt, it was the definite command of Jehovah, that "*there shall not a hoof be left behind.*" Likewise, when the great

captivity of the church shall once be turned, all that is capable of being restored shall follow the great and glorious conqueror from the "bondage of corruption," into the "liberty of the sons of God." On the great morning of resurrection to life, all things shall be made new. "*Not a hoof shall be left behind.*" Even "*the creature shall be delivered!*"

All this, however, cannot be done in a peaceable way. In order to allow the creature to have a share in the final restitution of all things, it must needs pass through the baptism with fire; and it will be from this final catastrophe of a universal conflagration, by which that great and terrible day, for which all other days were made, shall be lighted up, that a new heaven and a new earth shall come forth, "*upon which dwelleth righteousness.*" The whole creation will be cleansed from the dross, and all the refuse cast into the lake of fire.

As a soldier, who has committed a capital crime, is first stripped of his sword and his uniform, before he is to suffer the punishment of death, so at the last day, "from him that hath not, shall be taken that which he hath." The damned shall be stripped of the last particle of the good which they had upon earth. Not a shred of humanity, not a trace of the image of God, shall be left upon them; and the howling and gnashing of teeth of this "*cursed*" band of semi-devils, shall form a singular contrast to the hallelujahs of the ransomed on Mount Sion!

What an awfully solemn crisis, that of the last day!

What a ghastly sight, that of the departure of the damned! What a solemn subject for deep and anxious reflection to every one, whether we are, indeed, to be numbered with his saints in glory everlasting! If we are only attached to Christ as the life-giving vine, by the artificial string of a barren and unfruitful profession; if the Spirit of the living God do not animate our every thought, our every word, and our every deed; if we are not alive to those good things which lie beyond the horizon of this mortal life—then we are *dead*, we are now *dead in trespasses and sins;* and we carry already in our own bosom that mortal corruption, and we accumulate within us that mortal decay, which produces the worm which will never, never die! If we have no intercourse with heaven, no fellowship with the Father and with the Son and with the Spirit, no communion of saints; if we have no spiritual mind, and no spiritual life; if we have no faith in the Lord Jesus, no love for his name, no interest in his cause, and no zeal for his glory;—then we carry already within our own bosom the combustibles, and we daily accumulate within us the materials for that eternal flame, which no power in heaven, or on earth, can ever quench!

The last judgment will be the last act of Christ's mediatorial work. The threefold office of the Messiah shall then be fulfilled. His *prophetical* office shall be ended, because there will be no longer need of his instruction as the Saviour of the world. His *priestly*

functions shall be accomplished, because all that would and could be saved have entered into the joy of their Lord; and all that was capable in man, and in "the creature," to be reconciled, has been redeemed! The royal dignity of the Son of Man, in his character as the Messiah of the world, shall be at an end; there being no more friends to shield, and no more enemies to conquer. "*Then the end cometh, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.*" (1 Cor. xv. 24—26.)

Vast, indeed, will be the revolution produced by the final triumph of the God-man, Jesus Christ. Sin will be no more! Death will be no more! God will be all in all! The redeemed shall see him as he is!

From what has been now said, it will appear, that the history of the development of true Religion will be winding up its last scenes beyond the boundaries of time. It will not be completed here below. All things are now ready, the apparatus is complete, the action is sure and certain, but the work is not yet accomplished. This world will be sifted, and a new heaven and a new earth will appear, there being now nothing eternal, and nothing perfect under the sun. The whole frame and scope of the preparatory scheme pointed to something beyond the duration of the present scene. All the slow but stately progress of

revelation through past ages, imported a work which was calculated for eternity! The blessing of revealed Religion was seen to emanate from below the threshold of past eternity, it was expected and prepared through the ages of promise and prophecy, and it will demand a future eternity to be enjoyed by the Church of the living God.

13. We have had frequent opportunity to show the internal and organic connexion of the systematic development of revealed Religion. The Christian Religion appears by no means as a number of detached precepts, or as a set of doctrines, which could be brought suddenly and unexpectedly before man. Every stage of divine revelation was founded upon one which had previously existed, whilst it was likewise typical of one that was yet to come. This prophetical character of every single feature in revealed Religion, is one of the most pleasing and wonderful discoveries which can be made by the human mind, and it stamps upon every member of its system the character of divinity. There is something so incomparably sublime in the circumstance, that the several members are not only joined together under one head, and united by one common bond of union, but that each one at the same time embodies a miniature of the stupendous system of revealed Religion in its totality. Hence it will appear, that the most glorious consummation of the historical development of true Religion, which is set forth in the last three chapters of the Bible, has been already

anticipated in the first three chapters of the book of Genesis. It is remarkable to observe the manner in which the beginning and the end of the Bible are linked together, as it were by one holy and indissoluble bond of divine perfection and harmony. It is pleasing to note how this final glorious consummation of the whole counsel and purpose of God's eternal love, has in its general outlines been already shadowed forth from the very commencement of time. In reading attentively the last three chapters of the book of Revelation, we observe, how every single incident seems to be brought into close connexion with something which has been recorded in the first three chapters of the book of Genesis. It seems as if the Disciple whom Jesus loved was finally to seal up the Volume of Inspiration by exhibiting the close connexion subsisting between the final history of the Church triumphant, and that of the Church militant here on earth, as detailed in the first three chapters of the book of Genesis.

Thus, for instance, it is said, that "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth;" and at the end we are told, that the first heaven and the first earth having passed away, St. John saw a new heaven and a new earth. In the beginning, God made two great lights, to rule the day and the night. In the end, there will be no more need of the sun nor of the moon to shine; there shall be no night there, for the glory of God shall lighten it, and the Lamb shall be

the light thereof. In the beginning, the waters were gathered together unto one place; and God called the gathering together of the waters, seas. In the end, "there shall be no more sea," but a sea of glass as it were mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory standing on the sea of glass, having the harps of God, singing and harping the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb. In the beginning of the Bible we read of Paradise with its goodly rivers, with its pleasures of pure delights, with its divers kinds of trees; and the tree of life in the midst of the garden. In the end, we read of the city of God, with its pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb; and in the midst of the street, and on either side of the river, is the tree of life, bearing twelve manner of fruits, and the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations. In the beginning, man was made out of the dust of the ground; and in the end, he shall rise from the dust of the grave in the general resurrection of the dead. Again, it is recorded in the beginning, that the Lord God said: "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make an help meet for him." And when the Lord God had made the woman, he brought her unto the man; and Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh!" In the end, the Lamb's wife, the holy city, is spoken of as coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her hus-

band. In the beginning, God walked with man in the garden in the cool of the evening; and in the end, we are told that the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God! In the beginning, God rested the seventh day from all his works; and man being made in the image of God was commanded also to rest. In the end, the servants of God enter into his rest, to serve before his throne for ever and ever. In the beginning, man was to rule over all the earth, and to subdue it, and to have dominion over it. In the end, they are made kings, to reign with Christ for ever and ever. In the beginning, death enters the world; in the end, there shall be no more death. In the beginning, the seed of the woman is to bruise the head of the serpent; and, in the end, the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, is bound, and with a bruised head he is cast into the lake of fire for ever and ever. In the beginning, man is judged with his guilty companion after their mutual transgression; and in the end, small and great shall stand before God, and they shall all be judged according to their works. In the beginning, God said unto the woman, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow;" and to the man he said, "In sorrow shalt thou eat of thy bread all the days of thy life:" in the end, the sorrow of the man and the sorrow of the woman shall be no more. In the beginning, the ground was cursed for the sake of man;

in the end, there shall be no more curse. In the beginning, God said unto the man, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground." In the end, God shall wipe away all tears from all eyes; all sweat from all faces; there shall be no more crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away. In the beginning, God also made unto Adam and his wife coats of skins; and he thus clothed them significantly with the skins of animals typically slain, in all probability, immediately after their transgression. In the end, they are arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; they are clothed with white robes, which they have washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb, which has been emblematically slain in every sacrifice from the foundation of the world! In the beginning, man was driven out of the garden because he kept not the commandment of God, and the flaming sword of the cherubim turned every way, to keep the way to the tree of life. In the end, we hear a voice from heaven, saying, "Blessed are they that do his commandment, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates of the city." The description of this city, the new Jerusalem, consists not of mere figures and allegorical expressions; but we are plainly told, that the earthly Jerusalem was a type of Jerusalem which is above, and the mother of us all! And, as if to intimate that the *old Jerusalem* was a mere *figure*—a mere passing *shadow*—the heavenly

Jerusalem is declared to have been seen afar off by the patriarchs, as the city "*which hath foundations.*" This holy city, of which our Saviour said, "*I go to prepare a place for you,*" is seen coming down with him from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Being carried away in the Spirit to a great high mountain, St. John saw it descend from heaven; and he drew thence a most glowing picture, and gave a most transporting view. In describing this holy celestial city, the inspired seer employed figures of temporal objects which men are wont highly to appreciate; and, in order to imprint the general features of this holy city upon the pages of divine revelation, he exhausted all the glory, the beauty, the goodness, and the riches of nature. His inspired pen is seen *to labour*, as it were, in order to imbue our minds with some general idea of what God hath prepared for them that love him. Hence the profuse display of all the perfection of symmetry and form; of all the precious stones, of all the costly pearls, and all the pure gold. Let it, however, be remembered, that, as the old Jerusalem is but a type of the new, so this present world, with all its glory, with all its riches, and with all its forms of beauty, is but a type of the world to come. And when, ere long, these feeble shadows and emblems of good things to come shall have passed away; when the present scene shall be folded up; when the veil that now hides from our view the realities of the world to

come—when this veil shall be rent in twain from the top to the bottom—then we shall know how to admire that bright inheritance, which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away!

But what is the light of those precious stones, clear as crystal?—what is the garnishing of the foundation of the walls of the holy city with all manner of precious stones?—what are the twelve gates of divers pearls?—what are the walls of jasper? and what the streets of pure gold, as it were transparent glass?—what are these things in comparison with the brightest ornament, the glory of God, and the glory of the Lamb, which shall be the light thereof? The brightest jewel, and "*the pearl of great price*," which adorns this heavenly bride, is the most impressive exhibition of the glorious presence and majesty of the holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth. If it be asked, why the Almighty has so eminently adorned this city? why impressed the works of his hand with such brightness and majesty? why prepared a place of abode for himself, whom the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain? St. John writes: "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God!" All things shall be new, to wax old no more!

There can be no decay in the presence of the fountain of life. After the day of judgment shall

have cleansed God's heritage from everything that defileth, his Church will enter upon a permanent state of triumph and glory. Without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, complete and holy and perfect in Jesus their Redeemer, the saints of the Most High shall see God's face; they shall behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; they shall be made glad with the light of his countenance; they shall be satisfied with his likeness; they shall see no longer through a glass darkly, but they shall *see him as he is*, face to face. They shall hear from the human lips of the Son plainly of the Father, for in that day—in that bright, eternal day—he will speak no more in parables, but show them plainly of the Father; they shall be his people, and God himself shall be their God. They shall walk together in the full blaze of the light of his countenance; the whole breadth and length of the city will be so illumined with the glory of God—so adorned with the most tangible exhibition of his ineffable Majesty—that the inhabitants everywhere shall be alike sensible of his beatifying presence. There will be no temple in the Father's house—devotion will form no longer a distinct part of their blessed existence. With him, even with God, is the fountain of life; as the "happy God," he possesses in himself every principle of beatitude and felicity; from his blessed presence alone flows fulness of joy, and at his right hand alone are pleasures for evermore. Whatever gladdens the face of his angels above, and

whatever cheers the heart of men below, is only a feeble ray of the ineffable felicity of the Almighty. Every approach to him in Christ Jesus must be, therefore, an approach to felicity, life, glory, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. The enjoyment of his immediate presence must be the consummation of joy unspeakable, and the realization of happiness without mixture and without measure. Oh! what a multitude of sweet things are folded up in the declaration, that God will dwell with them, and they shall be his people!

When God is with his people as their God, there must needs flow from his presence *ten thousand* pleasures of pure delights, which now we have neither faculties to comprehend, nor powers to enjoy. There will be an eternal progression of those faculties by which we shall be qualified to love God, and to know God, and to enjoy his presence; yet these faculties of ours will never cease to be finite; hence the object of our knowledge, of our love, and of our adoration, can never be exhausted, nor yet searched out by finite creatures unto perfection. And if, for instance, in a flower, in a herb, in the human frame, in a *human face*, we find such wonders, such joy, such satisfaction; if, in the examination of the works of his hand, we are to ascend such heights, and dive into such unfathomable depths; if, in expatiating upon the length and breadth of only part of his ways, we find such marvels, such an accumulation of pleasure, such a complication of mysteries; what may we not expect

when the great Author will lay himself open to the view of his admiring and adoring creatures! when he will permit them to "*see him even as he is!*" when God himself shall be with them, and be their God! Oh, for the impatient language of patient Job, when he ejaculated, "*Oh that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat!*" And oh for the soul of David, when he exclaimed, "*My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God! oh, when shall I come and appear before him!*"

CHAPTER IV.

NATURAL RELIGION CONSIDERED WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ORIENTAL PAGANISM, AND THE SPECIFIC RESULTS OF EASTERN SPECULATION IN MATTERS OF RELIGION.

We have an endless variety of religious systems in the world. There are Jews and Gentiles, Christians and Mohammedans. Each of these have formed themselves into religious communities, and have maintained a certain position in the religious world. But it has never yet happened that a religious community has been founded, which exists under the denomination of the *Church of the Natural Religion*. The attempt has, indeed, been made, both on the Continent and in England, but it has proved utterly futile. And we might feel inclined to infer already from this circumstance, that Natural Religion, in the common sense of the term, was a thing without meaning, and that it was one of those phenomena in the world of Religion, which, from its indefinite form, and from its beggarly elements, was too weak to form a distinct community of professing members. This is very

natural. If it be granted, as an article of this natural creed, that each individual is able to frame from his own resources what is to serve as the foundation for his religious faith, it must follow, that every one will needs have his own Religion, his own Church, established upon his own authority! Perhaps, a few solitary individuals may happen to agree in some measure with each other; or limited numbers may be so far influenced by some extraordinary persons, as to form themselves into smaller sects. But a larger community could not be formed under these circumstances, there being no centre around which all could rally. A universal Religion could not be thought of, because every one would labour to maintain his own view in opposition to that of another; and every change of religious opinions would be followed by a change of the leading articles of this natural creed.

There has been, however, much confusion as to the definition of Natural Religion; and it has been, very probably, on this account, that its existence has been utterly denied by some individuals, whilst others have lavished upon it the most unlimited ascriptions of praise. Natural Religion, in some sense of the term, has been acknowledged by the Holy Scriptures themselves. We have already seen how the all-comprehensive scheme of divine revelation embodies every word and every deed of the Almighty, which has been impressed upon the broad face of the created universe, and upon the nature and constitution of

man; as well as those truths which are contained in the inspired records of the Bible. For when the Gentiles can clearly see the invisible divinity and his eternal power from the things which are made in the creation of the world, it is evident that there is a knowledge of God and divine things to be derived from the works of creation, and that, if we do not know God from his works, and glorify him for the sake of his works, we are without excuse. And when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, and when these, having not the law, are a law to themselves, it is evident that there must be written a law in their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another. (Rom. i. & ii.)

But in this point also, bigotry, as one of the besetting sins of human nature, has done its work, and induced one party to depreciate the merits of the case in question; whilst others, from a partial investigation of the subject, were led to exalt natural Religion to an undue elevation. Both views of the case lead to fatal extremes; and to both may be applied the complaint so characteristically descriptive of partisan zealotism: *Quid non placet, quid non intelligunt, hæresis est. Græce scire hæresis est, expolite loqui hæresis est; quidquid ipse non faciunt hæresis est!*

If natural Religion be the amount of truth which human reason has discovered, it cannot be our present

object to speculate what man without revelation may or may not accomplish. The shortest way of ascertaining the strength of speculative reason in matters of Religion, will be simply to investigate what it has actually done. In order to gain this point, we must not, however, consult Christian authors. Some of our most deep-thinking and honest philosophers have too often ascribed certain discoveries to the natural faculties of human reason which, in point of fact, were nothing but unconscious plagiarisms from the source of divine revelation. In endeavouring to distinguish too nicely the timid suggestions of the human mind, and the result of human reason abstractedly considered, from the associations of revelation with which they were familiar from their very infancy, and which they could not avoid imbibing during the earliest stages of the development of their reasoning faculties, they unconsciously attributed more to the native powers of speculative reason than was due to them in reality and truth. But how often does it happen that the debtor forgets the obligation which is due to his creditor, especially when a long period has elapsed since the debt has been contracted!

If India, Persia, Egypt, China, Greece, and Rome did not discover the several articles of natural Religion, which are laid down with remarkable precision in the modern systems of Christian philosophers, why should we suppose that the latter are indebted for the improvement to their own reasonings?

The self-deception is obvious to the most superficial observer. The latter were indebted to the beneficent rays of revealed Religion, whilst the former had nothing but the scattered remnants of primitive tradition to aid their metaphysical speculations. The Christian author composed his works respecting natural Religion after having breathed the pure and invigorating atmosphere of revealed Religion through every stage of his existence, and this in a measure with or against his pleasure. In order, therefore, to obtain an unqualified record, from a more impartial source, as to what amount of good has been accomplished by natural Religion, we must retire from the region which has been standing under the genial influence of divine revelation, and turn our minds to the systems of Pagan mythology, which may be emphatically styled the religious systems of nature.

2. It cannot be our present object to trace the spread of Pagan idolatry over the face of the earth according to its chronological and genealogical development. Much has been written, and many have been the fanciful speculations, as to the natural history of spurious Religion; but as it is also applicable to the present subject, *quantum est quod nescimus!* The efforts of too minute inductions must ever remain hazardous in the extreme. So much is plain upon the present subject, that the dawn of general and religious history broke in the East. The more extensive our inquiries, and the more profound our researches re-

specting the origin of the nations of the earth, the more we find ourselves directed to the East as the cradle of the human race; whatever may have been the effects of remote climates. We have already traced the history of revealed Religion, and the whole of the scene was thrown into the East; it is therefore natural to search for the rise and progress of its spurious counterfeits, where true Religion was originally promulgated and unfolded. The history of revealed Religion leads neither to India, nor to Egypt, nor to China, as the primitive seat and central point from which the human race emigrated after the catastrophe of the flood. But, in perfect harmony with the result of the most profound philosophical researches, the Bible leads us to Mesopotamia as the cradle of the postdiluvian race. The regions of Babylonia are distinctly specified as the seat of true Religion after the flood; and Babylon also became the notorious "mother of harlots," from which all Pagan superstition spread itself to the south, to the east, to the west, and to the north.

The dispersed nations were left to themselves from the period when Abraham was called out of his native country. They were confined to the law written in their hearts, and to the general revelation which is exhibited in the works of creation. If, therefore, natural Religion be that which embodies those religious truths which the speculative reason of man can discover without extraordinary revelation of the Deity,

the Religion of the Pagan world, who were destitute of this extraordinary revelation, must be the "*Natural Religion*," in the proper sense of the term. There must be truth in the natural Religion of the Pagan world, because they did enjoy part of the divine revelation, God having not left himself without witness. That which may be known of God is manifest to them, for God hath showed it unto them; and when they knew God and glorified him not as God, they were without excuse. God hath indeed suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways; nevertheless, he did them good, gave them rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness, that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might find him, and feel after him, as one who was not far from each one of them. It would indeed be intensely interesting, as well as instructive, to dive more deeply into the systems of Pagan Mythology, and to trace the actual working of the human mind, as it went forth with the dismal lamp of human reason "*to feel after God*" in every department of the created works of the Almighty. It can, however, be as little in our present plan to give a detailed account of the several systems of spurious creeds, as it was to trace the means and ways by which they were gradually propagated upon the face of the globe. We shall, however, take a cursory view of the actual state of Pagan Mythology, in order to enable us to form a distinct idea of the amount of religious truth which

the natural man is able to acquire without the aid of a special revelation.

The primitive form of Pagan idolatry, which seems to have been established prior to the dispersion of the postdiluvian family of man, was, as we have already seen, a symbolical representation of the "Father of lights" by the heavenly host; which was quickly superseded by actual worship of these luminaries which brighten the firmament. These superstitious notions, which recognised the *person* of the Deity in the brightest works of his hands, and derived from them not only the fertility of the ground, but even the good or ill that befals man, had been propagated from Chaldea to the whole of Western Asia, yea, all over the whole world; and this at a very early period. The worship was first confined to the sun and the moon, and it was only by degrees that the smaller luminaries of the nightly hemisphere were allowed to participate in the honours. We have already, in the last Chapter, specified some of the more profound causes of this species of idolatry in primitive days.

Babylon was the seat of the first empire of the world, and Bel, or Belus, appears as the founder and sovereign of the same; whilst the same personage, in a mythological point of view, appears always in the character of the solar deity. The temple of this deity was yet standing at the time of Herodotus; whilst a no less celebrated temple, sacred to the moon, was standing at Haran. The existence of this Pagan

temple at *Haran*, or, at least, the idolatrous tendency of the people at that place, seems sufficient to account for the call to Abraham to come out from thence. (Gen. xi. 31; xii. 1.) This lunar temple in the upper parts of Mesopotamia, where the family of Abraham had sojourned after they had left Ur of the Chaldees, was the place near which the emperor Caracalla was murdered. It was still much frequented at the time of Julian, when Haran was already in ruins. When man, however, had changed the truth of God into a lie, there appear still darker spots. God gave them over to vile affections, as was soon evident in the impure services of this goddess, which involved the sacrifice of modesty and female virtue on the part of every Babylonian woman once in her life, from which persons of the highest ranks were not exempted.

Thus early it had been shown that man was inclined to worship and serve the creature more than the Creator; and that this was the more inexcusable, as the sacred traditions had been preserved amongst them in comparative purity. We allude to one single instance, to show that they were without excuse:— According to the fragments of the annals of Berosus, which have been preserved by Syncellus, Xisuthros was the tenth king of Babylonia, as Noah was the tenth after Adam. It was to him that the Supreme Deity announced a great flood, which should destroy mankind on account of their wickedness, on the fifteenth day of the second month; and, according to

Genesis, it was to come on the seventeenth day of the second month. Xisuthros was commanded to build an ark, which should receive him, his family, and his friends. But before all things, he was to write an account of all events, and deposit it in Sepharvaim, *i. e.* "the city of the books," for the benefit of posterity. The ship was to be 625 paces long, and 250 paces broad. When the flood was subsiding, Xisuthros sent a raven and a dove to spy the state of the surface of the earth; they returned with mud on their feet, and the third time they returned no more! The king observed from this that the waters had disappeared; he opened the ark, and found that the vessel had landed upon the top of a mountain. Having gone forth with his wife, his daughters, and his pilot, he worshipped the earth; and having sacrificed to the gods he disappeared! There is in Sabaism the noblest effort on the part of man to represent the Father of lights. They acknowledge "Bel," "Baal," or "Lord;" but their Supreme Lord is the sun! In addition, they have "lords many;" none of whom, like the "Lord of Hosts," is the Lord of all the universe, but they are all parts of a whole, to the laws of which they are subject. How different appears Jehovah, who, as the Lord of all the hosts of heaven, protests in his holiness against the abominations of these nations by the mouth of his holy prophets! These deities formed part of Nature; their worshippers were "without God in the world," and capable of committing all the

cruelty and lasciviousness for which the rites of the sidereal divinities were distinguished. What a fearful caricature this of the *Natural Religion* in which the Gentiles were to know God, to glorify him and to be thankful!

3. There has been much boasting of the successful efforts of human powers, which are said to have been made in the religious belief, which existed originally in the Bactrian provinces of Central Asia, which became the established Religion of the Persian empire, upon the accession of the Bactrian Prince Darius to the Persian throne, and which has been, in a measure, preserved amongst the Parsee fire-worshippers of the present day. To give a detailed view of the Iranian fire-worship, it would, however, be necessary to give the history of this interesting nation, with an account of the ante-Zoroastrian character of their Religion. It would require, that we should enlarge upon the history of its reformer, and the nature of his reformation. It would farther be desirable to trace the chronological development of this religious belief, to show its affinity to other systems of Mythology, and minutely to examine the character of its sacred literature. But in order to determine in a general way, what the ancient Medes and Persians have accomplished in matters of Religion, without participating in the privileges of God's peculiar people, all these examinations will not be required. We shall, therefore, proceed to give a general view of their religious system, without reference to the

resources which may have been at their command, in order to determine what are the characteristic features of the natural Religion of that remarkable and energetic people.

The Supreme Being of the Zoroastrian system of belief, is Zeruana Akarana. He is the prime cause of all things that were and are existing. He is, as his name implies, the uncreated all-comprehending deity, and is as such unknown, invisible, and incomprehensible. He is, in another point of view, and with a different turn in the translation of his appellation, "*Time without bound.*" Upon the authority of classical and Oriental authors, this Supreme Deity created before all things light and darkness, fire and water; but these elements were not those which were afterwards created with the material world. These primal elements are to be distinguished from those which were to be created by Ormuzd. The primal light was independent of that which is peculiar to the heavenly bodies, which as yet did not exist; and it is also worshipped separately from the latter. According to the view which the Grecian authors took of the subject, these prime elements emanated from Zeruana Akarana, but according to the sacred books of the Parsees, which are known under the name of Zendavesta, they were created by him.

The creation, according to the Zendavesta, was brought about by the creative Word of the deity. This "Word," Honover, is, however, already existing as

something besides the deity, and it is frequently adored in the hymns and prayers of the Zendavesta as a self-existing being, which was created before all things. "The pure holy Word, Honover, O Zoroaster, was before the heaven, before the water, before earth, before the flocks, before the trees, before the fire, the son of Ormuzd, before the pure men, before the evil spirits, before the whole world, before all substance, and before all the pure genii of Ormuzd." The "word" is represented as having a soul and a body of resplendent light. This "word" is afterwards also effectual in the mouth of Ormuzd, who created every pure creature by Honover. Zeruana Akarana created therefore the prime elements of light and darkness, fire and water, by the "word" Honover; and it was, doubtless, by the same means, that he afterwards created an innumerable host of Spirits, the Feruhars, or Frawasi. These Spirits were the archetypes of the future world of angels and of men, which were yet to be created. The nature of man consists of body, soul, and spirit; but the spirit is thought to have pre-existed with God before the birth of man; and it is on the latter occasion that it descends from the upper regions, to be united with the human body and the human soul.

The chief of these created and immortal Spirits, are Ormuzd and Ahriman; Ormuzd having a body of light, and dwelling in light; Ahriman having a body of darkness, and dwelling in darkness. Each

appears at the head of six other Spirits, which correspond in rank and nature to their respective leaders. Ormuzd superintends his six congenial immortal Archangels, or Amshaspands, of whom he is the seventh; and Ahriman, on his part, is aided by six evil Dews, or demons. In addition to the mighty Amshaspands, there are twenty-four Yzeds, or good Spirits, which were ranked under the host of Ormuzd. These Yazatas, or Yzeds, have been generally represented as an inferior class of beings to the Amshaspands, but their name simply signifies "Adorable beings," which claim the adoration of men; and hence Ormuzd himself, as the chief of the seven Amshaspands, is called a Yzed in the Zendavesta. On the other hand, beings which are generally classed with the Yzeds, are occasionally styled Amshaspands; thus, for instance, fire is called the quickest of Amshaspands. Ahriman, as the chief of the seven Archdemons, either created or adopted other Spirits of a congenial character, which are known under the appellation of Daruds.

When Zeruana Akarana had created the invisible world of Spirits, he withdraws from the scene, and Ormuzd the Amshaspand commences the creation of the material world by the same Honover, by which the Supreme Deity had created the prime elements and the world of Spirits. The creations of Ormuzd were accomplished in six successive periods, which embraced a considerable space of duration. Ormuzd created in the first period the heavens, in the second the water,

in the third the earth, in the fourth the vegetables, in the fifth the animals, and in the sixth period he finally created man. The mighty mountain Alborti arose out of the centre of the earth. It grew, in two hundred years, to the height of the moon; in another two hundred years it reached the height of the sun; in two hundred years more it reached the sphere of the stars; and in another two hundred years it had grown to the height of the primal light, which had been created by the Supreme Deity! When it had outgrown its stupendous height, during the period of eight hundred years, the bright luminaries of the firmament commenced their revolutions around it, as their common axis; and when Ormuzd had finished creating the world, and appointing its guardian Spirits, he withdrew into the highest heaven of bliss and happiness, which is supported by the fabulous mountain Alborti. And with the completion of the pure creation of Ormuzd, three thousand years, or the first quarter of the world's duration, had expired. Ahriman and his Dews could not disturb the reign of the pure Ormuzd during this first quarter of the age of the world, for so it was decreed.

But when Ormuzd had now finished the creation of heaven and earth, Ahriman suddenly appears upon the latter in the form of a *serpent*, to destroy the good and pure works of Ormuzd. And the struggle between both armies of Spirits is described as having been attended with most extraordinary and terrific

signs. The comets of Ahriman caused confusion in the heavens; and Ormuzd brought a flood upon earth, to destroy the evil host of Spirits which were led by Ahriman, the chief of devils. The issue of this fierce conflict was, that Ormuzd, indeed, preserved the upper hand; but Ahriman could not be banished from the world of Ormuzd. He had occupied some of the heavenly bodies, and placed his Dews over certain parts of the earth, in opposition to the pure Amshaspands of Ormuzd. He had, in short, poisoned the pure creation, and created the smoke in connexion with the "pure fire, the son of Ormuzd." Night and darkness, cold and heat, make now their appearance for the first time.

When the world was thus defiled by Ahriman, Ormuzd determined to increase his powers upon earth by sending the pure Feruhars to become incarnate: the first of them being embodied in Goshurun, the primal bull, who is at the same time counted amongst the twenty-four Yzeds and worshipped like them. This famous bull was the first of living creatures upon earth, and contained the germs of both animals and men. Ahriman endeavoured to kill the contemplated creation of Ormuzd at one blow, in destroying the holy animal. But whilst the soul of the bull escaped from one of his sides, Kaiomorts, the first man, sprang out of the other. In ascending to heaven, the spirit of the bull carried with it the seminal fluid of the holy bull, and handed it over to

Anahid, the guardian Spirit of the moon, in order that she might preserve it for future creations of Ormuzd. If the creation of men and animals and plants has been said to have been accomplished during the fourth, fifth, and sixth periods of the creation which has been stated to have taken place during the first quarter of the twelve thousand years; and if it be now related as an event which has taken place during the second quarter of the age of the world,—this must not be attributed to a non-philosophical method of representing the subject on our part, but the contradiction is founded in the religious documents themselves. With reference to the dead body of the bull Goshurun it is further distinctly added, that from his tail grew all manner of corn, from his marrow all manner of trees, and from his blood was the vine produced! This fable has been preserved likewise by a number of monuments, which have been discovered even in Italy and on the Rhine!

Kaiomorts now was naturally exposed to the wrath of Ahriman; and he had scarcely reached his thirtieth year when he was killed by the Dews. But again the devices of Ahriman were discomfited, inasmuch as from the dying Kaiomorts sprang the first pair of men, Meshia and Meshianè, and they became the parents of the human race in the natural way of procreation; a pure Feruhar descending upon every newborn child, to be united with his body and soul. Whilst Meshia and Meshianè sprang from the seed of the dying Kaio-

morts, Ormuzd created from the seed of the primal bull, which had been preserved by Anahid, another bull and a cow, and from them originated all the different kinds of animals. Thus the *whole* creation of Ormuzd was finished. But Ahriman was not behind in his exertions. He created a counter creation of impure plants and trees, of poisonous fruits and vegetables to oppose the pure vegetables of Ormuzd. Again impure animals, wild beasts, poisonous reptiles were set in opposition to the pure animal world, created by Ormuzd. The powers of Ormuzd and those of Ahriman seemed to be equally strong; and it now depended upon Meshia and Meshianè, whether they would preserve their purity and adhere steadfastly to Ormuzd their creator. Ahriman beguiled Meshia and Meshianè; they did eat the fruit which was given unto them by the tempter: they worshipped Ormuzd no longer, but adored Ahriman and his evil Dews. But they lost the happiness which they had hitherto enjoyed, and their souls were cast into hell until the day of resurrection. And it is added, that if they had been faithful to Ormuzd, they would have raised their pure souls to bliss and happiness in the presence of Ormuzd.

Notwithstanding the revelation of Ormuzd to mankind through a prophet called Home, Ahriman increased with every new generation his power upon earth, and it came to pass towards the end of the second cycle of the Chronological era of the world, that his

kingdom had gained the ascendency over Ormuzd and his pure influence. He revealed himself, therefore, once more to Zoroaster, the illustrious reformer of the Iranian fire-worship, at the commencement of the third cycle of three thousand years. According to this reformation of the worship of Ormuzd, every other form of Religion is to be opposed, yea, still more every follower of Ahriman and his demons "is to be beaten in body, soul, and substance." This war of Ormuzd against Ahriman was to be extended from man and morals, even to plants and animals. It is made a religious duty to extirpate the obnoxious plants of Ahriman, and to kill all manner of impure animals. Every Amshaspand, every Yzed, with every pure particle in the creation of Ormuzd, is to be adored and worshipped. The pure flocks of Ormuzd are to be attended to with religious scrupulosity; pure trees and plants are to be cultivated; pure cattle are to be brought up; the ground is to be rendered fertile. The bringing up of holy dogs, the digging of wells, the killing of reptiles, the destruction of vermin of all kinds, the feeding of the holy fire with pure wood, are meritorious acts to cover a multitude of sins! Purity of thought and action are likewise enforced upon the followers of Ormuzd. The elements of earth, fire, and water are to be preserved pure from everything that is vile. Hence the extraordinary custom, that the Parsees to the present day neither bury their dead, nor burn them like the Hindoos, but

expose them in the tomb of silence to the birds of heaven!

We found that the law given by Home could not stem the influence of Ahriman during the second period of three thousand years; as little could all the pure laws of Ormuzd, which he revealed to Zoroaster, at the commencement of the third period of three thousand years, secure a triumph to the kingdom of Ormuzd. Ahriman is again to get the upper hand towards the end of this period. Troubles are to increase. Pestilence and famine will be some of the fiery darts of the chief of devils. He will cause his comets to fall from heaven upon earth. Such will be signs that the expiration of this third period of the world is drawing to a close. Holy men will rise in vain to admonish people to repentance, nor will their signs and miracles produce any effect.

It will be under similar circumstances that the fourth and last cycle of three thousand years will be ushered in. Zoroaster had opened the third period; but the fourth and last will be introduced by one far mightier and greater. It will be "the man of the world" —the redeemer *Sosiosh*, who will appear entirely to destroy the works of Ahriman. And now commences a period of millennial bliss and happiness. Not only will the happiness of those three thousand years be re-established, in which Ahriman was prevented from interrupting the harmonious and peaceful reign of Ormuzd; but Ahriman himself with all his evil Dews

shall be converted, and partake of the blessings which the advent of Sosiosh is to bring into the world.

In order that all generations of past ages should partake of the happiness, Sosiosh will raise the dead from the dust. This resurrection to life shall follow in the same order in which they were born in the world. First Kaiomorts, then Meshia and Meshianè, and so forth to the last man born of a woman. Sosiosh shall sit in judgment. The righteous ones shall enter into the joys of paradise; but the wicked in passing over the famous bridge of Chinnavad, which leads over the abyss Dutzak, into the paradise Gerotmon, shall fall down into hell. The state of damnation, however, is very short, and far from being eternal. Three crimes, however, of an unpardonable nature are mentioned; first, the eating of the flesh of dead men; secondly, the eating of the flesh of dead dogs; and thirdly, *a virgin refusing to marry until her eighteenth or twentieth year!* These criminals are to suffer until the end of the world!

The whole creation is to be reorganized and purified. To this end, a universal conflagration will ensue from the fire of Dutzak, which will melt down the elements of the earth like wax. Ahriman, his Dews, and all their followers, shall be purged in this severe purgatory of the boiling fluid for three days and for three nights, amidst unutterable torments, and after that they will be made fit for admission into Gerotmon, and the presence of Ormuzd. Thus, all

shall be cleansed from Ahriman's defilement, and Ormuzd himself shall be supreme.

The bodies of all men shall be spiritual; they shall require no longer food; they shall cast no shadow. A nectar of immortality shall be prepared from the juice of that wonderful Home tree, or from the water of the pure bull Hedeiawesh! And to all Sosiosh shall administer this nectar, to make their bright bodies immortal, "and they shall be incorruptible as long as time endures." All shall be united to the chief of Amshaspands; and Ahriman, once the chief of devils, shall now act as Dshuti, or priest, and lead the choir of praise and worship which is to be given to Ormuzd. This happiness shall last for the remaining three thousand years, which is the last cycle of the twelve thousand years of the world's duration. The Parsee, and his sacred books, are silent as to what new scenes will take place at the expiration of this happy period of time. Plutarch, the Grecian writer upon these subjects, only adds, that Zeruana Akarana, who had brought all these things about, shall retire for a season to rest!

4. There is in many a heart a secret interest to doubt the certainty of those truths of divine revelation, which have become obnoxious and disagreeable. If it be the determined wish of a man to look with a sceptical eye upon some holy truth which militates against his besetting sins, he will make his way through a thousand metaphysical "perhapses" until he has gained

sufficient boldness to remove one pillar of divine truth after the other. It was from similar motives that many individuals of this degenerated age hailed the discovery of some remarkable coincidences between the natural Religion of the *Persians and Medes*, and the revealed Religion of the Bible. There was great joy in the camp of the Philistine philosophers at the discovery, which it was maintained, would at once destroy the claim of the Bible to originality, and remove the disgrace which was thought to have been undeservedly cast upon human reason and its speculative powers. Yea, not only did they expect that by these analogies revealed Religion had gained a deadly rival, but it was confidently asserted, and is still believed by some, that revealed Religion is indebted for some of its leading features to the discoveries which the natural man had made in the Iranian fire-worship. But the anxiety of some anxious minds was as unnecessary as the triumph of the Gospel adversaries was ill-timed and premature in the extreme. In the first place, it may be observed, with reference to the speculative powers of human reason, that little as they have accomplished as to the discovery of truth, they could not have accomplished that little if all supernatural aid had been denied. The solitary strength of human reason and the natural faculties of man, has never yet received a satisfactory trial, not even amongst the Pagans, inasmuch as God has not left himself without witness. And, although the Pagan world was

denied a special revelation, they were never yet altogether without the fragments of primitive revelation. There is no Pagan Mythology which cannot be shown to have richly embodied these scattered rays of that primitive revelation, which sent its solitary but salutary and cheering sparks across the gloomy field of Pagan Mythology. These precious relics of divine truth, which have been transmitted through the dubious channel of obscure tradition from sire to son, were the source from which human reason derived some indefinite and general ideas of God, his attributes, his works, and his counsel. Tradition being supplementary to reason, its dim light served in all ages to aid the feeble efforts of a reason which could not boast of a spark of light which it could call its own. Human reason commenced with a fair amount of primitive truth, but instead of being a faithful steward in leading it forward to higher perfection, we invariably observe a gradual decay of the Pagan systems of Mythology; and the influence of philosophy in all ages and under all circumstances accelerated the process from better to worse.

There are some very striking facts exhibited in the Persian creed; and it is now to be examined whether true Religion has borrowed from this system of belief, or whether the Persian Mythology has been guilty of plagiarism from the tenets contained in the documents of the Bible. We must suspect plagiarism when certain analogies are discovered in one system after it has

been brought into contact with another system which did not exist before that period. Now it cannot be proved that there exists in the Zoroastrian creed one single truth which had not existed long before in the Bible. But it is evident that the Persian system embodied truths after it had been brought into contact with the exiled nation of the Hebrews, which were unknown to it before that period. And we maintain that Zoroaster was enabled by favourable circumstances to draw those ideas of divine truth from the source of divine revelation, which had not come down to him and his nation by the medium of ancient tradition. And this only accounts for the fact that his system of Religion embodies a few remarkable ideas which are foreign to any other religious system except that of the Bible.

According to the Zendavesta, Zoroaster, or Zardusht, appeared during the reign of the Bactrian king Vistaspa, which was changed at a later period into Kishtap or Gustap. It has been made plain from Grecian authors, as well as from inscriptions which have lately been discovered in Persia itself, that Gustap is no other than Hystaspes, the father of the Persian king Darius. Hystaspes, who is mentioned as the reformer of the Magian creed, was a contemporary of Cyrus, King of Persia. Cyrus revolted in the year 559 before Christ against Astyages, and this was at the same period during which Zoroaster appeared at the court of Hystaspes, King of Bactria. In the

course of ten years, Cyrus felt sufficiently strong to undertake his warlike expeditions.

He conquered Sardis in the year 546 B.C., and whilst his agent Harpagos subdued Asia Minor, Cyrus went against the Medes and the surrounding nations. In 538 B.C. he took possession of Babylon; and after this he subdued the Bactrians and the Massagetæ. After Cyrus had made the Bactrians tributary, Hystaspes, or Vistasp, the patron of Zoroaster, went with him against the Massagetæ who were inhabiting the country beyond Bactria. This will account for the fact that Cyrus himself is addressed in the Zendavesta by Zoroaster as Husraves. Cyrus being dead, his son Cambyses succeeded him in the Persian government; and it was Cambyses who took Darius, the son of Vistasp, as hostage to his court, because, like his father, he suspected the young Bactrian prince of rebellious intentions. But, in spite of all these precautionary measures, the energetic Darius at length succeeded in obtaining the Persian crown under the successor of Cambyses. "Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old." (Dan. v.) It was this Darius who was the son of the patron of Zoroaster who walked in his father's ways, and who propagated over the Persian empire the Religion which had been reformed under his father Hystaspes.

Now, if we refer to the manner in which these Persian princes were brought into contact with the

chosen generation, we find in the first instance that Cyrus, who was brought into immediate connexion with the Persian Dualism, had been called by name by the prophet Isaiah, (chap. xlv.,) about one hundred and fifty years before he assumed the reins of the Persian rule. Jehovah had anointed him to subdue nations before him; and declared that he would prosper him to the end, that he might know him as the God of Israel. Jehovah called him, though Cyrus did not know him. And in opposition to the leading principles of the Zoroastrian creed, with which Cyrus must have been familiar, Jehovah declares, "*I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me; I girded thee, though thou hast not known me. That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the West, that there is none beside me. I am the Lord and there is none else;* I FORM THE LIGHT AND CREATE DARKNESS; I MAKE PEACE AND CREATE EVIL; I THE LORD DO ALL THESE THINGS." In perfect harmony with this prophetic announcement, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, King of Persia, to make a confession of his great name, and of his obligation to build him a house at Jerusalem, and to allow the captive Jews in Babylonia to return to their own land in the first year of his reign. (Ezra, chap. i.)

Darius, the son of the patron of Zoroaster, the son-in-law of Cyrus, and the zealous propagator of the Iranian fire-worship, was pleased to place Daniel, then an old man, over the third part of his mighty empire, "and the king thought to set him over the whole realm."

And as Nebuchadnezzar, and Belshazzar, and Cyrus had made confession of the greatness of the God of Israel, so also Darius was forced to make a decree, "that in every dominion of his kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel." (Dan. vi.) And finding the decree of Cyrus, that the house of God should be again built at Jerusalem, he removed the difficulties which had been put in the way, and commanded that the building should be accomplished with speed. (Ezra, chap. vi.) And it is remarkable, that whilst the Persian monarchs were extremely rigorous against idolators, they were favourably disposed towards the Jews. The Persian representatives in Jerusalem received no salary, and entertained besides, daily, a hundred and fifty guests at their table, whilst their own servants aided in the restoration of the Holy City. Cyrus dismissed Zerubbabel, with such of the captives as wished to return, under the most auspicious circumstances. Artaxerxes, understanding the cause of Nehemiah's sadness, who was his cupbearer and minister, sent him with letters to Jerusalem, upon a most peaceable mission. Darius, the son of Zoroaster's patron, sent Ezra. And Xerxes, or Ahasuerus, who was the successor of the son of Vistasp, raised Esther, the Jewish maid, of the tribe of Benjamin, upon his throne as queen, "and set the royal crown upon her head;" and Mordecai, a Jew, is made the prime minister of the empire of Xerxes, which was "from India even unto Ethiopia, an hundred and seven and twenty provinces."

Can we yet be surprised at finding remarkable coincidences in the Zoroastrian system of Religion, when its reformer lived and acted under circumstances such as we have now mentioned? And can we not understand why the Arabian authors declared that Zoroaster propagated his Religion as the Faith of Abraham? And if a prophet of Jehovah was not only set over provinces and princes, but also was made "master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers," because there was found in him "light and understanding, and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods," can we not give some credit to the assertion that Zoroaster was the servant of a prophet in Israel? If we, in addition, take into consideration how much the Israelites were addicted in their own land to the lighting of sacrificial fires, and recollect the sacred flame which was to burn without intermission upon the Jewish altar, can we not conceive for what reason the Israelites were particularly favoured by the Persians? Nor, as far as we know, have we any distinct record, that the *house of Israel*, or the *ten tribes*, did not yield in a measure to the idolatrous practices of the fire-worshippers, who, moreover, had almost as deep an aversion to the actual worship of idols and images, as could be entertained by the true Israelite.

Again, the Zendavesta, or the collection of the sacred Scriptures of the fire-worshippers, is a strange phenomenon in the literary world. The classical writers mention, indeed, certain books, which were in existence

amongst the ancient Persians; but their accounts are far from being sufficiently definite to enable us to recognise the Zendavesta. It was only in the tenth century after Christ, that Mohammedan writers first mention its existence. The Parsees themselves consider it only a remnant of the sacred books of their forefathers. And whilst the Persian writers all agree that at the expiration of the Parthian rule, no sacred books were to be found, and that the Religion of the fire-worshippers was restored from the memory of the priesthood, the Armenian writers deny that they ever had any religious books whatever. And, indeed, the present collection of sacred writings consists chiefly of hymns and prayers, which might well have been restored or handed down by tradition. The Zendavesta is composed of books in different languages, and it is a remarkable fact, that the most striking analogy to certain ideas which are peculiar to revealed Religion are contained in that part which is called the Bundehesh, and written in the Pehlevi language. This book bears internal marks of being written at a much later period than even the Zendavesta. It contains, for instance, accounts of things which happened after the conquest of Persia by the Arabs! It has been proved that it could not have been written, at all events, before the conquest of Persia by the Macedonian conqueror. And if it be true that Grecian influence is visible in its pages, can it be denied that it has still more prominently a colouring from those ideas which are cha-

racteristically Jewish? And it is chiefly in this book that we read of the creation of the world out of nothing by the "word," Honover, which strongly reminds us of the Logos of the Jewish philosophy, as well as of Christian ideas. It is in this part of the Zendavesta also, in which we read of the temptation of Meshia and Meshianè by the Devil, in the form of a serpent—of their fall by eating fruit, and forsaking Ormuzd—of the Redeemer, Sosiosh, which reminds us strongly of Joshua and his prototype Jesus—of his work—of the judgment to come—of a resurrection to life—of the final dissolution and purification of the universe by fire, and of life eternal! How easily can all these ideas be explained from the certain influence which true Religion had upon the development of this system of belief; but there is, indeed, no necessity for assuming that the Bundehesh had been written prior to the Christian era, inasmuch as a sober continental learned writer had given it as his opinion, that it was not composed prior to the period of about two hundred and thirty years after Christ!

There have been great lamentations amongst the modern Parsees, as well as amongst the European literati, regarding the great and serious loss which the world had sustained by the non-preservation of by far the greater part of their sacred literature. Out of twenty-one books, one only, the Zendavesta, is said to have been preserved. A few more observations, however, will serve to show that the supposed grievous

loss is by no means irreparable, but that, perhaps, future researches will confirm what we now shall venture to put forth upon this very important subject.

We have already alluded to the fact that the Armenian writers deny the Parsees having ever had any doctrinal standard works, and this is confirmed by the Persian authors; and both parties, from their vicinity, must be considered competent judges. And it was very natural that the Parsee community, like the Mohammedan sect, should be anxious to lean upon some more antique authority. If the above statement of Arab writers be correct, that Zoroaster had given out his creed as that of Abraham, the question would be decided. That the Jewish Scriptures must have roused attention in those fermenting days is beyond doubt, especially as the fate of the different governments was prophetically laid down in them. It is expressly stated of Cyrus, that he became favourable to the Jews in consequence of his name being prophesied in it.

Now, as regards the lost books, their number is at one time stated to be twenty, and in another place they are said to be as many as twenty-one volumes. In a tract, which has lately been translated, mention is made of twenty-one volumes, besides "the Zand and Pazend," which would make a twenty-second volume. The Vasta, or the language of the books which are considered to be lost, is explained to be *the language*

of Ormuzd, and the Zand is said to be their *own language*, in which the Zendavesta, as well as its commentary, the Pazend, was written. From this statement we infer, according to the literal sense of the passage, that the twenty-one lost works were written in a different language from the Zendavesta, which was to be committed to memory.

How can we forbear to think, under these circumstances, of the writings of the Old Testament, which are computed at twenty-two books by Josephus, the Jewish historian? The discrepancy of the numbers of twenty-one and twenty-two will be removed upon recollecting that the prophet Micah had not yet been written when the ancient Parsees appealed to the authority of the books of the Old Testament.

Diogenes Laertius and Hermippus speak of the lost books having contained two millions of verses, and it is remarkable that the Hebrew Scriptures contain about that number of letters, which had been carefully counted by the Jews. The books of the Zand language containing only prayers and hymns, not much information can from them be expected upon the subject in question. It is very probable that the Hebrew Scriptures were lost among the ten tribes; but as they were preserved amongst the house of Judah, there was no moral necessity why they should have been preserved amongst the dispersed tribes of the house of Israel.

Again, it is to be observed that there were three

"laws". given before the advent of Zoroaster; just in the same way as Mahommed maintained that prior to him was given the Law and the Gospel. The first law, given to Mahabad, was called the "*Regulation*," or the "*law*." The second was given to Home, and the third to Hushang. In connexion with the above arguments, it will not appear indifferent that the Old Testament was, at a very early period, divided by Philo, Josephus, and Jesus Sirach, into three classes, viz., the Law, the Prophets, and other writings.

The foregoing remarks may suffice to account for the appearance of religious ideas in the Persian creed, which are justly looked upon as the exclusive property of the Hebrew nation. Before, however, we dismiss the present subject, we notice one particular doctrine, which is supposed by some people to be of a purely Persian origin:—we allude to the doctrine of angels. We should exceed the limits of our plan were we to enter upon a detailed view of this important subject. We admit that there was, indeed, additional light thrown upon the Hebrew doctrine of angels, at the period of the exile; new definitions were added, and we might hence suppose that a decided influence of the Parsee system upon divine revelation had then taken place. Whilst we, however, acknowledge that the Persian Dualism had an influence upon true Religion, we do solemnly protest against the arbitrary notion, that the latter has borrowed a

particle from the former. On the contrary, we have irresistible evidence that divine revelation has never once engrafted Pagan elements into its system. All that was revealed was, however, made known in perfect adaptation to the time and the circumstances of mankind. We must again refer to the character of divine revelation, in which it adapted itself throughout to the moral wants of man. Under the Mosaic dispensation could not be revealed what was revealed in the era of the prophets. Truth was given to confound its spurious semblances; it reveals what is good, in order to neutralise what is evil. The new features in the Hebrew doctrine, respecting the angels, at a period when the Jews were brought into contact with the Zoroastrian theories respecting beings of that kind, is no proof of its having been derived from the latter, but rather a confirmation of the uniform character of revelation, in which it adapted itself most seasonably to the special requirements of every age and the circumstances of each successive generation.

It has been particularly brought forward, that the *naming* of angels, as it appears in the books of the Old Testament which were written in the period when the Jews came into contact with the Persians, was borrowed, and must, therefore, be looked upon as Pagan. Now, the older books of the Bible do not, indeed, mention the names of angelic beings, although, on two occasions, they were most anxiously sought. The reasons for this refusal, may have been of a

complicated nature. In the first instance, there had been no spurious theories existing among the Pagans at that early period, as was the case in the time of the exile. The angels of Zoroaster all bore their respective names, and the Jews having been made acquainted with these phantoms, was sufficient cause that those that were angels indeed should likewise have their names. Again, nothing being allowed which could have drawn the attention from the Lord who sends, to the *messenger* who is sent, there might have been some danger in revealing the names of these ministering Spirits to people who were greatly tempted to believe in the existence of "lords many." Now, the inclination of the Jews towards idolatry, during the period when the names of angels were unknown, and the absence of that danger when the names were revealed, are both points which are clearly established by their history. If there was, moreover, a time when individual angels were to oppose individual phantoms, it was the period of the Exile.

The fact of angels being called by particular names was, however, in no wise a thing altogether new and unprecedented in the history of revealed Religion.

That the doctrine of angels was known to the Hebrews long before the exile, no one will deny; nor can it be overlooked, that it is the general character of the divine revelation, to pass from generalities to particularities and individualities. The names, again, of some of the angels of Jehovah, which seem to have

reminded certain people of the Zoroastrian appellations of angelic Spirits, are very simple and easily translatable into any one given language; let us, for instance, take that of Gabriel, the "Man of the Almighty;" and this was, moreover, the signification of the name in the very language in which it was used.

The assertion, therefore, of Rabbi Simeon, that the names of angels were brought by the Israelites from Babylon, implies by no means a negation of their having been revealed. The revelation of certain names of angelic beings took place in Babylon. How natural this was at the time of the exile. The temple was destroyed; the priesthood, as mediating between God and his people, was dissolved; the visible token of God's presence amongst his flock had departed; and how comfortable and seasonable must have been the doctrine of the angelic messengers, and the divine guidance of the fortunes of nations by their agency, just at that period. (Dan. x. 13, 20, 21.) Again, if we take into consideration the notion which prevailed amongst the nations of antiquity, that the victory of one nation over the other, especially when the national sanctuaries were destroyed, was looked upon as the triumph of the gods of the victors, we may well imagine that the deeply humbled Hebrews might have given way to doubts, whether, perhaps, the Amshaspands and Yzeds might not have overcome Jehovah. It is not improbable that they were, at all events, to hear similar remarks from their victors. The

Hebrew Church, therefore, required something to strengthen and confirm their confidence in Jehovah; and the best comfort that could be given under the circumstances, was the revelation that the angels of Dualism could do nothing against Him, whose messengers are even the highest of spirits. As regards the classification of the angels of the Hebrews, we find angelic princes already in the prophet Isaiah; inasmuch as the Seraphim are nothing but *angelic princes*. The very name of Seraphim is preserved in the Arabic Sherifoon, which signifies princes; and it may now happen to European travellers in the East to be called Sherifoon, or princes, by the flattering tongues of Orientals. Every other translation of the word Seraphim, which makes it "serpents," or, "sacrificing priests," are fanciful and untenable to any one acquainted with the original, and its cognate forms in the Semitic languages.

From the days of Genesis to the days of the prophet Samuel, the manifestations of angels were closely interwoven with the covenant "Angel of the Lord," who was "*the prince of the host of the Lord.*" At a later period, the Angel of the covenant seems more and more to withdraw, and the prophets behold angels around the throne of God. At the advanced period of Daniel, the *Covenant Angel* no longer appears himself, but sends *his angels*. When, however, Michael, one of the latter, is styled the prince and protector of the Jewish nation, we must not confound him with

the "*Covenant Angel*," or the "*captain of the Lord's host*" (Josh. v. 15); although he is called *the great prince*, or *one of the great princes*, in the prophet Daniel.

Michael is called the prince of the Jews, and in the same way Gabriel appears throughout the prophet Daniel as the guardian of the Israel of God. Those who seek in chap. x. 13, 20, the idea that Pagan nations in like manner enjoyed the same privilege, seek for something which is certainly not in the text. Gabriel, indeed, is represented (Dan. x. 13) as having rendered special protection to the Persian kings, or rather as having overruled the plans of the Persian monarchs; but this was done because they, no doubt, were in some connexion with the Theocratical history of Israel. The prince of Greece, on the other hand, (Dan. x. 20,) is no other than Alexander the Great. Help, moreover, was rendered by Gabriel to the Persian monarch, (Dan. xi. 1,) in order to enable him to conquer Babylon, the conquest of which was necessarily intimately connected with the history of the Theocratical nation.

In order to repel the idea of the Bible having derived a single spark from the Persian creed, respecting the angelic spirits, it will be recollected that whilst the number seven is of the greatest importance, we have only two angelic princes in the canonical books. The prophet Daniel must not be ranked with the Book of Tobit, in which we have indeed seven angelic princes, or archangels, similar to those of

Ormuzd. But the book in question is apocryphal, because it admitted the elements of spurious Religion. Even the later Jews classified the angelic host by the number ten, and not by the number seven.

Finally, if the doctrine of angels in the Bible were derived from the Persian creed, we should, at all events, have a very different system in both cases. If the ideas contained in the Bible were plagiarised from the system of Zoroaster, it would appear very strange that it should be more simple and unadorned than its original; instead of the one derived, as is generally the case, being the more adorned, expanded and drawn out to ridiculous lengths. Pagan nations, however, have discovered nothing which revelation brings in at a later period. The doctrine of angels is purely Hebrew, and as old as revelation itself; and how poor, miserable, and insipid is the Zoroastrian theory respecting angels, as regards its origin, its physical import, its ridiculous and fantastical character, in comparison with the occupants of an invisible world, who always appear in a manner in which they give glory to God and comfort to the believer.

5. Amongst all the systems of natural Religion which have been produced by mankind without the pale of divine revelation, there is none so complicated and so confused as that of the *Hindoos*. When it was first made known in Europe, with its enormous pretensions to antiquity, there was, likewise, great rejoicing in the camp of the unbelievers. The school of an

infidel philosophy eagerly swallowed its contents, and being intoxicated with another draught of the "*cup of fornication*," they prophesied, and shouted as they prophesied, that, sooner or later, Christianity would be buried in oblivion. But the circumstance of this religious system being a strange compound of contradictory elements, was extremely unfavourable to the cause of those who were determined to humble revelation, and to raise the reasoning faculties of proud humanity upon the throne.

From the above-mentioned confusion of ideas in the Hindoo Religion, it has come to pass that we may read and study a thousand works, all of which will propound different systems, and take a different view of the case. But, although thus differing in most essential points, they may yet be faithful representations of Hindooism. There is no shade of religious error, no philosophical turn in the religious speculation of the natural man, which has not been expressed in this Mythology. Not only, however, are the writings of English, German, and French authors upon the subject confused in the extreme, but if we go even to the Hindoos themselves, and question them on religious matters of the greatest importance, we find that these accounts are likewise at variance one with the other; and for a thousand contradictory statements the Hindoos will know some sacred book, to which they will appeal as to their authority. It was, indeed, this unparalleled confusion of the Hindoo Scriptures which

has been the cause both of the uncertainty and the contradictory character of the verbal accounts of the Hindoos themselves, as well as of European authors, upon these matters. And it is this consideration which ought to have produced among authors more forbearance than has been shown towards each other, upon finding that different accounts were given of the same subject.

There have been numerous and radical changes in the Religion of the Hindoos, according to their sacred literature. The *Natural Religion* of the *Aborigines*, or the ante-Brahminical Religion of Ancient India, was a worship of devils and the powers of nature; a creed which is still retained amongst the hill tribes of the present day. Their superstition rests as much on the natural suggestive fears and desires of the human mind, as on traditions, which were handed down from father to son, alike without embellishment of song, or the precision of the established chronicle. Their imagination fills their gloomy forests with malevolent Spirits, human, super-human, infra-human, and particularly the ghosts of their ancestors, and of the divers beasts of prey which were their companions. Their worship is principally a deprecation of evil, conducted by bloody sacrifices and peace offerings to the beings, seen and unseen, from whom they apprehend injury. When they rise above this devotion, it is to worship the multifarious powers of nature, the elements of the earth. They have no regular and

established priesthood. Their principal ceremonies and services are conducted by the aged and honoured persons of their community, both male and female. Thus, the Religion of the aborigines is retained amongst a large portion of the Hindoos up to this present day.

In treating of the Hindoo Religion, much of the above confusion has arisen from considering all the nations settled in the plains, and ranging over the mountains of Hindostan, from the Himálaya to Cape Comorin, as originally embued with one faith, and following one religious ritual.

It is now, indeed, generally understood, that within the above-mentioned limits there is not one, but several nations, diverse in origin; and it is obvious to the observation of every one, that there are now, within the boundaries of Hindostan, different religious systems. Yet it is still a common opinion, that what is usually called Hindooism, or the Brahminical Religion, was the ancient faith of the whole country; and that it maintained undisputed sway till inroads were made upon it, first by Buddhism, and subsequently by Mohammedanism. A close inspection, however, of the rites and ceremonies practised by the Hindoos throughout India, will convince us, that the notion of a universal prevalence of Brahmanism, and that of its being the original faith of the whole of Hindostan, are alike unfounded.

In the first place, the Brahmins themselves have a

tradition, that their primitive seats were to the north of the Himálaya mountains. It was, likewise, from those regions that the myriads, under the names of Scythians, Goths, Turks, and Mongols, emigrated into the southern regions of Europe and Asia. In confirmation of this tradition, we find in that vast plain, (amid the mountains of Tibet, marked in D'Anville's Ancient Geography as the primitive seat of the *Brachmanni*,) the Mánassarowar, *i. e.* the Lake of Intellect, by far the most sacred of all the Hindoo places of pilgrimage, and the Brahmaputra River, winding its way to the eastward for more than fifteen degrees of longitude, till at last it bursts through its mountain barriers, and descends into the plains of Hindostan; just as the Brahmins, those other sons of Brahmá, (for this is the meaning of *Brahmaputra*,) descended to take possession of the more genial plains to the south of the Snowy Mountains. Tradition relates, that the descent of the Brahmins took place near the western extremity of the chain, at the chasm by which the Ganges makes its way into India, and which is called the Gomukhi.

If, then, it once be admitted that the Brahmins at first were but foreigners in India, we are not to suppose that the country was uninhabited till the period of their migration. Besides, the lighter shade of colour, and the bolder physiognomy of the priestly race, show them to be decidedly a different tribe from the lower

castes of the population, even after every allowance has been made for their better appearance from less exposure to the elements, and a superior mode of living. Their ancient traditions at the same time speak of all the country to the south of the Vindhya Mountains, namely, the Dekhan, the *Dakshin*, or south country, the Carnatic, &c., as being anciently inhabited by Rakshasas, or demons, a name no doubt applied to the unlettered and uncivilized aborigines of India.

If, then, the Brahmins were once foreigners in Hindostan, and the country previously peopled by a different race, there is a strong presumption against the Religion of that aboriginal race being Brahmanism.

It is farther to be considered, that at the present day the above-mentioned hill-tribes of Bhils, Ramoosis, and Koolis, which inhabit the mountains in the Dekhan, have no communication, in matters purely religious, with the Brahmins; and even the Mahars who live in the villages, though outside the walls, require none of their services in making offerings to their gods, and have gurus, or spiritual guides of their own caste to *open their ears*, as they term it, to divine instruction, and whisper into them the sacred incantation. The Brahmins have, however, so far prevailed as to make their services essential at births, deaths, and marriages. Young children receive their names from a Brahmin; the person contaminated by a dead body requires water for his purification from a

Brahmin, and at the marriage, *he* puts the grains of rice into the hands of the parties. These are institutions, however, partly civil, and partly religious; and the Brahminical interference in these points tends to confirm our main position, by holding up the Brahmins rather as having promoted civilization, with which those rites are intimately connected, than as having from the beginning acted the part of priests between the worshipper and the deity.

Several of the gods worshipped by the common people are, moreover, unknown to the Mythology of the Brahmins. The same deities are worshipped by the outcast mountaineers, Mahars, &c., and the Hindoo agricultural population, while it is looked upon as a disgrace to a Brahmin ever to have recourse to the aid of such demons.

All these considerations go to prove the existence of a more ancient form of Religion among the Hindoos, prior to the introduction of Brahmanism—a Religion, too, which the new system, in some parts, has yet but very partially succeeded in supplanting.

In investigations of this nature, however, it is to be borne in mind, that the Brahminical Religion, like that of ancient Greece and Rome, is exceedingly accommodating to other idolatrous systems. When the ancient Romans came to any new country, they were sure to find there a Jupiter. Not content with a Jupiter Capitolinus at Rome, and a Jupiter Olympius in Greece, they must make one of the Egyptian

Hammon. According to the same principle, the Brahmins find everywhere incarnations of their principal divinities. Whenever they find among other idolaters a god they wish to reverence, they make him an incarnation of that one of their own who most resembles him in attributes and worship. Innumerable local incarnations of gods have thus sprung up throughout the country; and as soon as any one of these becomes somewhat famous, a legend of the god of the place is composed, and given out as belonging to one or other of the Pooránas.

A close investigation of the subject will show that there is much of what is now esteemed Brahmanism, foreign to that system. Some of these things are ancient, and some modern; but neither is the one class nor the other perfectly incorporated with the ancient Religion of the Brahmins. And it is this incompleteness in the amalgamation of the different and heterogeneous systems, which enables us to resolve the whole into its proper elements, and to detect the traces of that ante-Brahminical worship in India.

The worship of Vetál, for instance, seems decidedly ante-Brahminical; and yet, in a large district of the Maratha country, scarcely a village is to be found that does not publicly testify its respect for him.

Vetál is generally, in the Dekhan, said to be an incarnation of Siva, the prince of devils, and wonderful exploits performed by him are related in a book called the Vetál Puchísi; but this composition has not had

the good fortune to gain the voice of the Brahmins. On the contrary, they look upon it merely as a parcel of fables, and dispute the claims of Vetál to any divine honours whatever. As, then, the Brahmins universally reprobate both his character and worship, and acknowledge him in none of their sacred books, it seems rather hard to tack him to their system, and call his worship a part of Brahmanism.

That the worship of this demon is not of modern invention, is apparent from the fact that Vetál has no proper image whatever. It seems, then, probable that this worship was introduced previous to the custom of likening the gods to men and other animals. Again, Vetál has no temple, but is worshipped in the open air, generally under the shade of a wide-spreading tree. This circumstance, also, connects his worship with the most ancient forms of idolatry. The Canaanites in the time of Moses had no temples, for while the Israelites were commanded to remove every vestige of their idolatry, even to cast down their idol-groves, no mention is made of temples.

Vetál is worshipped in sickness, and vows are made to him, which are paid on recovery. The votive offering is generally a cock, the same that the Greeks were in the habit of giving to Æsculapius, when he interposed with his sanitary powers on their behalf. The blood is presented in a vessel, and the deity is supposed to smell it, and be satisfied. The carcass is taken away, and eaten by the person who has charge

of the place. *No priest* is required to make the oblation; the person who pays the vow, or supplicates the aid of the god, being *his own priest*, himself offers the prayer, slays the animal, and presents the blood.

Another occasion of worshipping Vetál is when any one is possessed by a devil, afflicted by madness, epilepsy, any severe nervous disease, or obstinate intermittent fevers, which are all ascribed to demoniacal agency. In such a case, a person expert in discerning the marks of possession is sent for. After going through a number of magical ceremonies, and saying charms which are kept a profound secret from the uninitiated, he determines whether Vetál or what other god has caused the disease, whether the demon has been moved by the magical incantations of any one to afflict the sick or insane person, who the magician is, (if magic has been used,) and how the god is to be propitiated and the demon expelled. The expiation for the afflicted person is generally a cock to Vetál. If so, one of his friends takes it to the god, and, after waving it round his head, and entreating favour for the afflicted person, offers it in the way just mentioned.

A singular coincidence exists between the history of the Greek word for demon and the Sanskrit Bhúta. The Greek word is applied by Homer and early Grecian writers to the highest intelligences, and means one possessed of superior knowledge. The Sanskrit Bhúta is derived from the verb which signifies ex-

istence, and is applied to the elements of nature, and even to the great god Siva himself. But as demon with a change of Religion lost the sense of a deity amongst the Greeks, and came to be fused down to mean an evil spirit, so now, in the Indian languages derived from the Sanskrit, Bhúta is entirely confined, in common speech, to a wandering ghost or malicious spirit. Again, as the term demon was, among the Christian Greeks, frequently applied in a bad sense to the gods their fathers worshipped, so among the Brahmanized Hindoos, the term Bhúta is applied contemptuously to the ante-Brahminical objects of worship. Those classes, however, who worship these Bhútas never apply this term to the objects of their adoration. They style them gods and village gods, but never Bhúta or devils, although they do not deny that the term Bhúta is applicable to them.

We infer, then, from the pertinacity with which the common people cling to this demon-worship, notwithstanding all the ridicule cast on it by the Brahmins, and their constantly terming them gods, while the Brahmins as constantly call them devils, that this worship was established before the arrival of the Brahmins in the country, though perhaps in some things it may have been a little modified by their influence and that of their Hindoo disciples.

We are also informed respecting the primitive Religion of Ceylon, that the whole of that island, previous to the arrival of Buddha, was overrun with devil

and serpent-worship; and analogy may lead us to conclude that the same was the case in India before the arrival of the Brahmins. It may, however, be observed that, in the proper English sense of the word, no such being as a devil is known among the Hindoos. The idea of an angelic being fallen from its pristine holiness and glory, and now possessed of malicious qualities, is a Hebrew and Christian idea, and in this sense no Hindoo worships devils. What Hindoos, both the followers of the Brahminical system and all the others, do worship, are superhuman powers. Some of these beings are endued with good, and some with bad qualities; and the Hindoos suppose they are to be worshipped according to their natures. When they worship a malicious being, *they do it in the spirit in which an honest citizen* pays *black-mail* to a robber, and not because they respect and love his character.

The worship of the heavenly bodies formed as much a part of the Religion of the aborigines of India, as that of demons. It is still part of the modern system of the Hindoos. Yet commonly those planets only are worshipped from *which they have to fear some evil*, in consequence of having been born under some unfavourable conjunction or other. If the Hindoo is born under a *lucky conjunction*, he is *indifferent* about the planets; if the case *is against him, he will worship them with all religious scrupulosity*.

Brahmanism, then, has evidently not always been the Religion of India. The Brahmins, as the higher class

of the population, have evidently been foreigners, who invaded the country to subdue the aborigines. Although we are, perhaps, unable to decide at present whether they came from Central Asia, or from the Caucasian mountains, or from the plains of Babylonia, or from the borders of the Caspian sea, still it is certain that they are emigrants, and that their Religion was exotic in India, at least as regards its primary elements. Hindooism has undergone many serious alterations, modifications, and changes from various causes. The elemental worship has grown old; the animal sacrifices have been abolished; the gods of the Hindoos have been displaced from their former spheres and stations, and other gods, unknown to them by name or description, have taken their place. Private sanctuaries have been converted into public temples. The site of the ancient fire-altars was occupied by images, the works of man's hand. Primitive equality, modified by the respect paid to influence, attainments, and occupation, has been destroyed by the establishment or reinforcement of caste. Laws, regulations, precepts, and ceremonies have been multiplied to infinity. Tradition has been supplanted by discussion, and discussion has been superseded by imaginative invention. The customs of society, and the national creed, have been so completely altered, that the Hindoos of the present day would not share the privileges of Religion, nor move in the same circles of social life with their ancestors, were they to revive!

The earliest records of Hindoo sentiments, indicative alike of the imaginative and devotional cast of their mind, are unquestionably contained in the *Vedas*. Of these ancient books it may well be said, in a religious point of view, that "*Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.*" The obscurity in which the major portion seems to be enveloped, has tended to increase their authority in the mind of the Hindoos, and to give an edge even to European curiosity. This is natural. When curiosity is once called into existence, the absence of the object is apt to augment its value, and to inflame the desire of seeing it. The Brahmins have evinced no contemptible knowledge of human nature, by studying to conceal the sacred writings from the public gaze. The veil of obscurity which they have thrown over it is a master-piece of priestly artifice. Ignorance has shrouded its imperfections from popular observation, and ensured them a credit which a familiar acquaintance might probably have soon overthrown. Unseen and unknown, they have ever possessed an appearance of awe and majesty, of which nearer inspection might easily have denuded them. That which we cannot see, we do not despise. The farther the object is removed from our sight, the more advantageous is it, in many cases, for its credit. The *scarcity* of the Vedas, which has in no small degree served to enhance their value, is so great, that it has been supposed that no integral copy is

now procurable in any part of India! There is a transcript of what is considered to be a complete copy of the Vedas in the British Museum. But how confined the circle upon which their light now shines, in comparison with the primitive days, when, according to the accounts of the Hindoos, the Vedas actually *walked about as gods incarnate* in the country of Vishnoo!

The Vedas are properly five in number,—the Rik, the Sama, the White Yajur, the Black Yajur, and the Atharva. A Veda consists properly of two perfectly distinct parts, the first being collections of hymns, the second liturgical treatises. The first part is called Sanhita, the second, Brahmana. These two parts are probably not of the same age,—the hymns being more ancient than the liturgical treatises. Among the five Vedic books denominated Sanhita, there are, however, only four collections of hymns. The fifth, or the so-called hymns of the Black Yajur, is a liturgical work. Among the four collections of hymns, the Rik is the most extensive, amounting to nearly 11,000 verses. The Atharva hymns are nearly as numerous; the hymns of the White Yajur may amount to half as many as those of the Atharva, and those of the Sama to one-fourth of those of the Atharva. The hymns of all the four Vedas taken together may amount to about 30,000 verses. But the hymns of one Veda are often repeated in one or more of the others. Nearly the entire Sama is in the Rik. About half the Yajur is in the Rik. The same may be said of the Atharva,

respecting which it has been conjectured that one third was contained in the Rik Veda. The collection of the sacred hymns of the Rik Veda is an astonishing work, and proves the existence of a scientific development of mind among the Hindoos at a date long anterior to that when the Homeric poems were brought together. More than one thousand hymns are here before us, in which the ancient inhabitants of the Punjâb implored blessings on themselves and their herds, saluted the glowing East, sang the combat of the lightning-darting god with the dark night, and rendered thanks to the celestial powers, which had dispensed to them, as they believed, succour amid their battles. It must not be supposed, however, that the hymns of this Veda are exclusively religious. One of the hymns describes in jocular language the revival of the frogs at the commencement of the rains, and compares their croaking to the singing of the Brahmins in worship. Probably, those non-religious portions belong to a later period.

The Rik professes to give the hymns in the complete form in which they were "*seen*" by the Rishis. Not so the Sama and Yajur, the liturgical purpose of which has materially affected their contents. In the Sama, the metre has had much influence; similarity of sound even, appears frequently to have affected the succession of verses. The undoubted fact that the hymns of the Sama and Yajur form part of the Rik, does not prove that the contents of the Rik were first collected. Probably, those that were required in worship, viz:

those of the Sama and Yajur, were first brought together. The collecting of the Rik hymns depended on other and more scientific grounds. The Atharva does not present us with single unconnected verses, but with complete hymns, the order of which is determined by their subjects. In this respect, it resembles the Rik. Indeed, it may be called a supplement to the Rik,—a supplement which aimed at comprising the religious hymns of a period, when the Mantra was no longer the expression of direct religious feeling, but had degenerated into a kind of charm or magical formula. This Veda, then, consists mainly of texts intended to protect against the hostility of divinities, against sickness, against wild beasts, &c.; it contains curses against enemies, invocations of healing herbs, and prayers for aid in the occurrences of ordinary life, for safety in travelling, success in play, and so forth. In the passages common to the Rik and Atharva, the latter introduces many capricious inversions and alterations. In the portions peculiar to the Atharva, the Sanskrit approaches to the flowing diction of a later age, although the forms of the words still remain archaic. A remarkable fact in the relation of the Rik and Atharva is, that the Rik towards the end contains many sections decidedly bearing the character of Atharva hymns, and actually found to be contained in the Atharva.

There have been certain historical facts deduced from the Rik Veda by modern researches, relating to

the two celebrated Saints Vishwamitra and Vashishta. There are certain passages, relating to a great struggle which is represented as carried on by the ancient chief families on the banks of the Yaska, which are identified with the Hydraotes in the Punjâb. It is held to be established by the Rik that the ancient Hindoo families resided farther to the *North-west* than we find them in the later books, and nearer the Indus than the Yamuna. The Sindhu or Indus is often mentioned, and highly celebrated; in the Rik hymns, it is termed, for example, the most copious of streams;—whereas, the Ganges is only once referred to, and then, with no special commendation. The remaining rivers of the Punjâb can also be clearly made out.

We find the ancient families which are accounted holy in the later Indian books, represented in those early poems as actively engaged in strife and war. Races which, at the remote period referred to, possessed a common habitation, a common speech, and a common creed with those holy families, were afterwards widely separated from them in all respects. The Religion that was born on the five rivers, was reared into a stupendous system in more southern lands; and the Brahminic people applied the appellation of barbarians to those tribes which they had left behind, and which received a different development from themselves. The ancient songs, breathing strife and slaughter, were succeeded, in the fertile plains of the South and South-east, by sacrificial hymns and

prayers; the gods, too, changed; and the once chivalrous race, courting ease and abandoning itself to superstitious dreams, retained no trace, except in a rigid asceticism, of that dauntless and energetic spirit by which, in days of old, it had been so remarkably distinguished. Among the Vedic Rishis, Vashishta was farthest to the South-west, and already possessed the region that subsequently came to be regarded as the holy land. Vishwamitra was farther to the North-east, and in the tract which was afterwards held to be barbarous, Vashishta, in whom the lineaments of the future Brahmin are discernable, was in subsequent times exalted above his warlike compeer. Vashishta is the priestly hero of the new order of things. Vishwamitra is the last representative of the warrior-shepherds of the Punjâb.

It has been generally admitted, that there are noble remnants of a shipwrecked Monotheism in the ancient Vedas of the Hindoos. These sacred books declare that there is, indeed, but one deity, the Supreme Spirit, the Lord of the Universe—who is perfect truth, perfect happiness, without equal, immortal, absolutely supreme —whom neither speech can describe, nor mind comprehend—all-pervading, all-transcending, delighted with his own boundless intelligence—unlimited by space or time—without feet, moving swiftly; without hands, grasping all worlds; without eyes, all-surveying; without ears, all-hearing; without an intelligent guide; understanding all—without cause, and the first of all

causes — all-ruling, all-powerful — the producer and former of all that is produced and fashioned.

Angelic beings crowded the eternal throne, and humbly asked, what the Supreme Spirit was himself. Brahm answered, "If there was another than myself, I would describe myself through him. I have been from eternity, and shall remain to eternity; I am the first cause of all that exists in the East and the West, in the North and in the South, above and below. I am all, older than all, King of kings. I am the truth. I am the Spirit of creation, the Creator himself. I am knowledge, and purity, and light. I am the Almighty."

It is scarcely credible, that associated with these lofty ideas we should find other elements, which oblige us to charge the oldest and most revered compositions of one of the earliest cultivators of learning with the crime of having at the same time fostered a spirit of idolatry and Polytheism in the truest sense of the term. The Vedas may, indeed, be exonerated from such a charge, if by idolatry be only meant the worship of graven images, and by Polytheism the acknowledgment of separate gods, with equal powers and perfect independence. But as the worship of created substances in general is idolatry, and as the acknowledgment of any gods besides the Supreme Spirit is Polytheism, we are obliged to look upon the most ancient form of Hindooism as being idolatrous in nature and tendency, however readily we may acquit

the Vedas of ever having inculcated the making images of wood and stone.

We have already alluded to the character and spirit of the most ancient hymns and prayers of the Vedas, as being directed to the heavenly bodies above, and the elements of nature around them. A supreme Governor of the Universe is indeed acknowledged, under whose vassalage the inferior deities hold a kind of feudal dominion. The very first efforts of the devotion of the Hindoo, of which the Sanhitas may be considered proper indices, were accordingly directed towards a simple but imperfectly developed species of idolatry, not dissimilar to what we have already discovered amongst the Persians and Medes, as well as amongst the Babylonians. Whilst they acknowledge one Supreme Being, the immediate objects of worship are without number. The Sanhitas, as effusions of the rude devotion of the ancestors of the Brahmins, contain prayers and ascriptions of praise to the sun, the moon, and the stars; to fire, water, air, and some imaginary powers. This is no doubt genuine idolatry. They lapsed from an adulterated Monotheism into elemental worship, or the deification of the powers of nature.

The fundamental doctrine of the Vedas is the doctrine of the Divine unity. But whilst the Bible teaches that there is but one God, to the exclusion of all other gods; the doctrine of the Vedas is, that there is one God, to the exclusion of all other existences whatever. In the

whole universe nothing exists but God! This is Pantheism!

The worship of the heavenly host, and the worship of the elements, was evidently an attempt to simplify and to familiarise the majesty of the Supreme Spirit. Metaphysical Deism will always induce a similar symbolization and materialization of the Deity. The belief of the unity of God was introduced into the Vedas from tradition. But they perverted the truth of God into a lie; and it has come to pass, that in all India there is, at present, no one temple consecrated to this Supreme Deity. The Græco-Roman systems were founded upon the acknowledgment of the great "*Father of gods and men*," Jupiter-Zeus, and after the revolution of a number of flourishing centuries, the Apostle Paul found in "*Athens the illustrious*" but one altar dedicated to the "*unknown God.*" This is the Spirit of Polytheism!

The framers of the Sanhitas combined the elements of Monotheism and Polytheism. Religion with them being more a matter of sentiment than rational conviction, they ignorantly laid the foundation of a thousand difficulties. They believed in one God, but were betrayed into practical Polytheism. This difficulty being felt by their successors, the deficiency was to be supplied by the didactic treatises attached to the Vedas, and called the Brahmanas and Upanishads. We have an effort in these parts of the Vedas to reduce the Vedantic dogmas to a uniform

system. In speaking, therefore, of the ancient system of Brahmanism, we must lay it down as a first principle, that no modern description of the ancient system is for a moment to be listened to, further than it is supported by the genuine and undisputed productions of the Rishis themselves. These productions are the Sanhitas of the Vedas, especially of the Rig-Veda, and nothing else. The treatises called Brahmanas may, some of them, be ancient, but by no means so ancient as the Sanhitas; while the Upanishads are nothing but modern philosophical tracts and essays tacked to the Vedas. Yet it is these last-mentioned works alone that Ram Mahun Roy, and some other writers, have particularly cited to prove that the Vedas contain the doctrines of the unity and spirituality of the Deity. That the Sanhitas and Upanishads belong to eras far removed from one another, is evident from a slight inspection of their contents. The Sanscrit, like all other languages, must originally have been a spoken tongue, and, as long as it continued to be so, must, like all other spoken languages, have been constantly undergoing change. When the Sanhitas of the Vedas were written, the language was still in a rude state, and far from the perfection it has since attained. When the Upanishads were written, it had already received its last polish, and was the finished, and nearly unrivalled, vehicle of human thought it has since continued to be. The Sanhitas show us the language in its first, the Upanishads in its

last stage. Nor are the differences between the two forms of the language few or trivial. It is impossible to find two consecutive lines of a Sanhita, in which there is not some obsolete word, some antiquated form of construction, or some unusual inflection; so that without the glossaries and comments, no Pundit, however well versed in modern Sanscrit literature, could understand the Sanhitas.

The *Religion of the Pooranas* is, again, totally at variance with that of the aborigines, as well as with that of the ancient Vedas. The deities are changed, and the ceremonials altered; old divinities are forgotten, neglected, reproached, and even laden with malevolent imprecations, and new ones have been substituted in their place. The deities become incarnate in animal and in human forms, and the more simple elements of primitive Brahmanism are superseded by the worship of a thousand fresh divinities. It has thus come to pass, that the whole of the Hindoo Mythology represents on a large scale the scene which the author witnessed in one of the idolatrous villages of India. He approached the temple, which, as is usual, was situated on the outskirts of a small hamlet. As he drew nigh, he was struck with some thirteen or fifteen idols, which lay scattered all around in a mutilated condition, whilst some two or three received the devotions of the simple villagers in the temple. Upon inquiry what ill had befallen those unhappy gods wh ch were scattered here and there, and all around the sacred place, he was

informed, as he had expected, that they all had their day of honour amongst them; that they were once in the temple, and received divine worship; but that they were thus disgraced, because they were found to be good for nothing, and others had been substituted in their place.

The Supreme Being, Brahm, becomes *Brahma*, the first member of the Hindoo Triad. He is generally looked upon as the producer of the universe; but the ideas of the Hindoos, respecting the creation of the world, are utterly confused and contradictory; each of the four or five Vedas, and each of the numerous Pooranas, containing different accounts of this important subject. If the contradictory nature of the account of the creation of the universe is urged against its authenticity and reasonableness, the shrewd Brahmin will endeavour to evade our objection, by declaring that there has been more than one creation of the world, all of which are recorded in the Hindoo Scriptures. That this is really one of their extravagant notions, we shall now endeavour to show.

An ordinary year is considered to be equal to a day and a night of the gods. Three hundred and sixty of these divine days and nights constitute a "*year of the gods.*" Twelve hundred such years form an "*age of the gods;*" or, as it is generally termed, a *Mahayug*, or great age. One of these ages is, therefore, equal to four hundred and thirty-two thousand years of mortals!

One of these great ages of the gods is subdivided, upon the principle mentioned on a former occasion, into four smaller ages, which, in some measure, correspond in number, succession, and character, to the golden, silver, brazen, and iron ages of the Greek and Roman Mythologies.

Seventy-one of the great ages of the gods compose a grand period, styled a Mavantara; a cycle of time, during which one Manoo, or Saint, with his posterity, is supposed to be invested with the sovereignty of the earth. Of these Manoos, there are fourteen in number, who reign in succession; and there are, therefore, fourteen Mavantaras of equal length.

These fourteen grand periods of time, with certain residuary additions, equal in all to one thousand Maha-yugs, make together one Kalpa. This Kalpa, consisting of four thousand three hundred and twenty millions of common years, is again looked upon as "a day of Brahma, and his night also has the same duration." Three hundred and sixty of these enormous days and nights compose a year of Brahma, a period which exceeds in length three billions of the years of mortals. A hundred such years is the duration of Brahma, and of the universe; or, in other words, the age of Brahma and the duration of the world is calculated at upwards of three hundred billions of common years!

Above half of this time has already expired; and we are now living in the four thousand nine hundred and fifty-fourth year of the Kali Yug, of the twenty-

eighth Mahayug, of the seventh Mavantara, of the first Kalpa or day of the fifty-first year of Brahma's age. In other words, we are now considerably beyond the hundred and fifty billionth year of the creation !

Having thus ascertained the age, and estimated the duration of the universe, we proceed to the changes which have taken place in the world. The Mexicans of old divided the age of the world into four cycles, at the end of each of which, by the agency of one of the elements, the human family was swept from the earth, and the sun blotted out from the heavens, to be again rekindled. There were similar periodic mutations, according to the notions of the Hindoos. At the commencement of each important cycle of time, such as the Mahayug, mankind is declared to be on the whole comparatively virtuous and happy. The latent predispositions to evil, which are inherent in their nature, are, however, made manifest by degrees. Human depravity is becoming worse and worse. Accordingly, at the termination of each cycle of time, there are great changes, ushered in by floods and storms, designed for the punishment and destruction of a degenerate race of men. These catastrophes affect only the terrestrial globe, which is again repeopled by the righteous, whose lives have been preserved by a miraculous interposition of the Deity.

But there are other changes recurring at wider intervals, of a far more momentous character. At the close of each Kalpa, or day of Brahma, commences

his night. The deity retires to sleep after the fatigue of the day! When about to enter upon his night of repose, which is of equal length, he surrounds himself with darkness. The heavenly bodies are shrouded in gloom; torrents of rain pour down from the sky, and mighty tempests trouble the ocean. The seven lower worlds are at once submerged, as well as the earth which we inhabit. Yea, the waters even rise to the two worlds next in order of ascent above the earth. In the midst of this tremendous abyss, Brahma, as Vishnoo, reclines on the huge serpent Ananta, or eternity, with closed eyes, and reposes in mysterious slumber! Here, then, we have a deluge, which by covering the seven lower worlds, and the first three of the seven superior worlds, reaches above the Polar Star, according to the position assigned to it by the Hindoos. All the wicked utterly perish; those that were good and righteous, and the progenitors of mankind in the world above the earth, Indra, and all his inferior gods inhabiting the third world, all rush in consternation and terror into the fourth world, or that which rises immediately beyond the Polar Star. Those amongst them that are most distinguished for meritorious virtue, may ascend still farther into one or other of the highest worlds. In these worlds they remain unaffected by the deluge, until Brahma's night is over. When he awakes, the heavenly bodies shine again, the waters disappear, and the earth reappears; every form of being is renewed, by a process which, in many

respects, is only a repetition of that pursued at the primary manifestation of the universe. A partial destruction of the same kind, or a disorganization of the ten lower worlds, recurs at the close of every Kalpa, or day of Brahma, and a similar renovation at the termination of every succeeding night. And as there are thirty-six thousand days and as many nights in his life, there must be thirty-six thousand partial destructions, or disorganizations of the larger moiety of the universe, and as many reconstructions of it during the period of its duration. But when Brahma's life comes to a close, there is no longer a partial destruction, but an utter annihilation. Then takes place a Maha Pralaya, or great destruction of the entire universe, with all its furniture and inhabitants, for then all things are reduced to absolute nonentity.

This catastrophe is said to be ushered in by a hundred years' rain; and whilst for a hundred years more storms and hurricanes are fiercely drifting, dismal vapours will darken the atmosphere; the sun with terrific beams will drink up the sea and the rivers of water. Circling masses of flame will envelop the world in a universal conflagration. They will commence the grand process of the dissolution of all things, or their resolution into those seminal principles whence they sprang. (See 2 Pet. iii. 6—10.) When all shall thus be re-fused into the essence of the Supreme Brahm, all souls good or evil, all spirits just or unjust, will find a speedy absorption in Brahm; in

short, all things corporeal or incorporeal, animate or inanimate, gods and men, angels and devils, animals, vegetables, minerals, earth, sea and sky, fire and ether, sun, moon, and stars, all things visible or invisible, will shrink away into more and more general forms, till they are wholly re-absorbed into the impersonal essence of the Supreme Spirit, the sole-existent incomprehensible Brahm!

But the present universe is not the last and only one; it is only a link in the chain, one end of which is lost in the depths of the past time, and the other will be in the depths of the future. After this grand destruction, when myriads of ages (compared with which the life of Brahma is but as a grain of sand compared to the solar system) have passed away, Brahm always awakes again. No sooner does he awake, than he wishes to manifest the universe, and then all things are reproduced by the same process above-mentioned. Every successive universe is but a repetition of that which preceded it. During the existence of each, it is subjected to the same periodic disorganizations at the close of every day of Brahma; and to a corresponding series of renovations at the close of every night of Brahma. And always when Brahma's life expires, the universe is again and again completely absorbed, or annihilated. Thus, there has been, according to the Hindoo Shastras, an alternating succession of manifestations and annihilations of the universe, at intervals of inconceivable length, through-

out the ages of eternity; and there will be the same alternate succession of both production and reduction, throughout the eternity that is to come.

Before we conclude this subject, we must make some reflection on the present Kalpa. Brahma awoke from his slumber as usual, and with the period when the lower worlds emerged from the waters of the great deluge, the sacred History of the Hindoos is made to commence. In the same way as at the dawn of preceding Kalpas, Brahma's first work was to renew the different races of animated beings, which had perished in the deluge. Practice does not seem to have improved his productive skill; for at the last renovation his difficulties were as great, and his experiments as ridiculous and numerous, as ever. After arranging the divisions of time,—days, months, years, and ages,—he at length succeeds in producing, *first*, trees, climbing plants, fruits, roots, and all manner of herbs; *secondly*, birds, cattle, and creeping things; *thirdly*, many sons, who became the heads of classes of superior beings, gods and demi-gods, good and bad; *lastly*, the human race. The production of all these orders of beings was carried on in one of the higher heavens, that had remained unaffected by the deluge; and after the water subsided, they were let down to take possession of earth and other lower worlds. Along with them descended the first of the Manoos, Swayambhura, with his spouse, the beauty Shatarupa, to exercise dominion over the earth. To them were

born many sons, some of whom embraced an ascetic life; and seven were appointed viceroys over the seven great continents. Some of these, again, had seven sons, among whom the continents were equally subdivided, and separated by seven rivers of divers fluids, and seven chains of mountains. One of these chains was four hundred thousand miles high, reaching to the moon!

Of these monarchs, who lived about two thousand millions of years ago, various minute particulars are recorded. Some reigned hundreds of thousands of years. Some voluntarily abdicated the throne, renounced the world, embraced an ascetic life, retired into forests, and became entitled to celestial happiness. Some, like Jemshid, taught their subjects agriculture, manufactures, and various arts. Some became universal conquerors, and raised their country to the highest pitch of prosperity and renown. Similar fables seem to refer to the primitive days in which the dispersed tribes of the human family were settling in their new abodes.

The accounts of the *first Mavantara* having been brought to a close, we are next furnished in succession with various particulars respecting the second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth, at the commencement of each of which a different Manoo began to reign, and transmitted his empire to sons and grandsons onwards to its close. The *present*, or *seventh* Mavantara, was introduced, as usual, by one of the inferior deluges; that

is, a general deluge confined to this earth. Of this deluge, *different accounts* are given in the sacred writings, in many respects irreconcilably discordant, but agreeing in most of the leading particulars, which strongly resemble the principal features in the Mosaic description of the flood.

Immediately before the deluge, towards the end of the Kaliyug of the last Mahayug of the preceding Mavantara, the holy Manoo, Satyavrata, like Noah, stood almost alone in the midst of universal depravity. By the margin of a sacred stream he was accosted by a fish, in which, without his knowledge, according to one account Brahma, according to another, Vishnoo, had become incarnate. The fish appealed to the humanity of Manoo to save it, being of very small size, from the more powerful and rapacious monsters of the deep. The kind-hearted Manoo at once complied, and put it into a crystal vessel. As time rolled on, the fish, waxing too large to find room for moving in the vessel, begged to be removed to another place. It was then borne to a spacious lake, but soon grew too large for the lake to contain its bulk. At its request, it was next carried to the Ganges, but it so increased in size, that that stream became too narrow for it. Lastly, from the Ganges it was conveyed to the ocean; and there expanded to the distance of a million leagues, blazing like a thousand suns. The fish then addressed Manoo, promising to be his guardian and protector; foretold the approaching deluge,

by which the world, and all things therein, would be submerged; commanded him to build a ship, and to go on board with *seven* sages. (2 Pet. ii. 5.) Manoo being forewarned of the waters of the deluge coming in seven days, he went into the ship, bearing with him, according to one account, the *seminal principles of all existing things;* and agreeably to another, *the birds and beasts after their kinds.* As the time appointed drew nigh, Manoo, with his illustrious companions, embarked. The horned fish appeared in his form, "*like a mountain huge and high.*" Lashed to the prominent horn of the fish, Manoo's new-built ship commenced its perilous voyage. Earth was seen no more; all was water only; and except the ship, the seven sages, and Manoo and the fish, nothing remained to be seen for years and years. Till at length it came to the loftiest peak of Himavan, where the fish addressed Manoo, asking him to bind the ship to the said peak. The sage obeyed, and ever since the loftiest peak of Himavan is called Naubandhanam, or, "the binding of the ship!"* The king Manoo, with his seven saints, left the ship, and they worshipped the Deity! It is rather remarkable, that according to the Talmud, king Og, of Basan, (Deut. iii. 11,) remained as one of the great giants; and it is said, that he rode over the

* The root of the Sanscrit word "*Nau,*" ship, is retained in Νᾶυς, navis, navy. In "*bandhanam*" we recognise the Saxon, band, bind, binden, &c. The author is convinced in his own mind that the analogy between the cognate branches of what is generally called the *Indo-Germanic* tribe of languages is far greater than is generally supposed by European philologists.

flood upon an unicorn, which was tied by Noah to the ark!

If we take a comparative view of the flood of the Bible, and of that which is especially reported in the Mahabharata, and in the Bhagavad, we find that in both cases mankind was corrupted. In both cases, the Deity forewarns a pious man, that the flood should break in after seven days. In both cases he is to build a ship for his safety. The saint, in both cases, is accompanied by seven other persons, and the Padma Poorana mentions three of them having been Sherma, Charma, and Jyapeti. Both are to take with them food, and all manner of living seed. In both cases the flood is occasioned by waters from above and from below. In both cases the ship rests upon a mountain, and in both cases also the redeemed saints worshipped God, and became the progenitors of a new race of men. According to another account, we have also an analogy to the intoxication and the curse of Noah, in the Hindoo legends. In both cases, finally, new laws are given to men.

The present Mavantara having been thus introduced, we may pass over the twenty-seven Mahayugs that have intervened since its commencement, and come at once to the twenty-eighth, in which our own lot is cast. This Mahayug, like all the rest, consists of the four lesser Yugs: the Satya, Treta, Dwapar, and Kali. Of these ages, from what we ascertained on a former occasion, the first three have expired, and we are now in the four thousand nine hundred and

fifty-fourth year of the Kaliyug. According to the notions of the Hindoos, each Manoo does not reign *in person* throughout the whole of the seventy-one Mahayugs of his Mavantara; but he reigns only in every first age, or Satya Yug, and then disappears during the remaining three that follow it; continuing "*to dive and emerge like a water-fowl till the close of his Mavantara.*" Thus, then, during the whole of the last Satyayug, nearly two millions of years, the Manu Satyavrata reigned. He left nine sons, among whom he divided the earth, partitioning to each his separate kingdom.

At the time of the *last* reproduction of the universe, the best of beings were not absolutely perfect. Immediately on having emanated from the divine essence, they were at once endowed by the Supreme Lord with the seeds of all manner of qualities, "noxious and innocent, harsh and mild, just and unjust, false and true;" but in degrees and modes infinitely diversified. These, however, have been acquired in a previous state. As the assuming of a corporeal form is not the commencement of the soul's existence, so neither is the dissolution of the corporeal form its termination. But as bodily forms, the temporary abodes of souls undergo a constant succession of mutation, the proper *destiny of every soul being to transmigrate, with a view to expiate its guilt, and wipe away its stains, by means of pains and sufferings,* through millions and millions more of these forms, throughout the stupendous cycle

which constitutes the life of Brahma, or the duration of the present universe, with its fourteen worlds.

With the doctrine of Metempsychosis all is connected in the Hindoo mind. All revolves in everlasting circles around the centre, which is the great Brahm. The notion of Metempsychosis is one with which the whole system of the present and future existence of the Hindoo is connected. As this system is one of the most powerful bulwarks that oppose themselves against Christianity, so it is the mother of innumerable errors and vices. According to the notions of the Hindoo Scriptures, Brahm is the centre of all; the Soul of the universe. Around him are drawn the several worlds as the peripheries within which the eternal transmigrations of the soul in search of bliss and happiness are to be effected. Every individual has upon it his own wearisome journey, until at last, like a wandering comet, he returns to the central power of attraction from which he proceeded.

According to the Pooranas, a man having forfeited the sphere of his human existence, is obliged to pass through eight millions of births of the lower creation, until he is again able to attain to the station he had lost. Of these eight millions of births, he attains two millions one hundred thousand births in the inanimate creation, the mineral and vegetable kingdom; nine hundred thousand years more he is detained amongst the insects and worms; another million he migrates through the birds of heaven; and three millions he

passes through the animal world. If he is found faithful up to this stage, he will continue moving among the lower castes for four hundred thousand years more, and then ascend four hundred births to the dignity of a Brahmin; from this last station, with an inconceivable leap he is united to Brahm! Now, the *intellectual* and *moral* state of the Hindoos show distinctly, how injuriously this belief operates upon the individual as well as the whole community of the nation. Every individual in holding this doctrine, is at once deprived of the whole basis of thought and reflection, and obliged to calculate upon laws and principles perfectly different from those which are suggested by sound reason and common sense. Man, in forming his judgment of any occurrence, or given historical fact, naturally goes upon the simple method of tracing the effect to its corresponding cause. But this connexion between cause and effect is utterly taken away from the Hindoo mind, by the belief in the doctrine of Metempsychosis. He is not allowed to form an opinion, as he is prompted by his own nature, but he is forced to derive his effects from causes which he neither knows, nor has observed, nor can comprehend. All he daily experiences, is the fruit of a former existence of which he has no shadow of recollection. The Hindoo is thus forced by his religious belief to disown a law which he sees in operation all around him; he cannot unite the causes within or about him, with the effects of which he is either the victim or the recipient. The world of causes is

beyond his horizon, in a former existence, which is closed before his eyes. He lives only in the world of effects; and the disciples of Metempsychosis study a science called Kurrembaypuck, by which they pretend to discover the character of any man in his former state of existence; and those who acquire this science are gifted with the power of prescribing particular expiation for each crime. We shall give a few examples of diseases which are supposed to be punishments for crimes committed in a former state:—

Lameness is a punishment for having kicked a Brahmin. The cure of this may be effected by presenting one tola of gold in the shape of a horse to the Brahmins, and feeding one hundred and eighty Brahmins.

Fever is a punishment for killing a Brahmin: Cure—making a lotus of four tolas of gold, and, after repeating certain incantations, giving it to a Brahmin. A stealer of gold from a Brahmin has whitlows on his nails; a drinker of spirits, black teeth; a malignant informer, fetid ulcers in his nostrils; a false detractor, a stinking breath; a stealer of grain, the defect of some limb; a mixer of bad wares with good, some redundant member; a stealer of dressed grain, dyspepsia; a stealer of holy words, or an unauthorized reader of the Scriptures, dumbness; a stealer of clothes, leprosy; a horse stealer, lameness; an adulterer, blindness. Evil-minded persons suffer a morbid change in their bodies; a slanderer, palsy. A fox is inhabited by a man who was guilty of a breach of promise to a Brahmin.

Every crime, therefore, *must* be atoned for by a particular penance, and all those who have not been absolved of their guilt will again spring to life with disgraceful marks!

For the same reason, to return to our argument, the Hindoo is unacquainted with the idea of moral obligation, a sense of which can only result from a clear perception of our present existence. He finds himself doomed to eat the fruits of such deeds as he has done in the body during a previous birth. Hence, every idea of moral responsibility is utterly unknown to him; for he only reaps the fruits which had been sown in a former life, of which he knows nothing, but which he must believe, because the Shastras and the Brahmins demand his belief on authority unknown. Thus, the poor Hindoo is destitute of every true spiritual and moral idea; he is nothing but a dead, unhappy machine, which is put into motion by the deserts of a prior existence, and to which he must submit, until he has completed his circles, and time be no more.

With this *spiritual* and *moral annihilation* of the character of single *individuals*, is intimately connected THE STATE OF SOCIETY in general. The rights, privileges, and duties of individuals, arise upon the basis of the laws of civil society, and by these ties they are linked together as a body of various members. Punishment and rewards are distributed agreeably to this relation, and upon these grounds. The nations of

Hindostán are destitute of any basis of this description. They must indeed bear with each other, live together, obey laws, and be punished for transgression; but all this is merely a practical correction of a wild and fearfully unreasonable theory. The Hindoo is punished, but very wrongly; and the belief in a former existence, which makes him a dead machine in matters of faith, makes him also a dead machine in a civil point of view. The Hindoo must be content to bear with everything.

Hence their country has ever been an easy prey to every foreign invader, and hence it has never enjoyed a state of national independence. History gives a responsive echo to this statement. Darius Hystaspes conquered every province on the Indus *without much effort*, experiencing none of that opposition which he met with at the plain of Marathon, nor encountering a single bold patriot to be at all compared with the celebrated Miltiades. Alexander the Great *easily* reduced a great part of India. Seleucus held an undisturbed sway over most part of Bengal. Encritides held five thousand cities east of the Indus without the *slightest* opposition. The Mahomedans ravaged India's best portions with *impunity*. And now, after a series of petty intermediate invasions, India has fallen into the hands of a people whose name, but a few years ago, was quite unheard of in that land. Thus has India repeatedly been attacked, her treasures drained, and her people ever doomed to bow beneath a foreign yoke. But on all those occasions, not one

has had the true patriotic spirit to stand against the many ruthless invaders whom her riches have ever since attracted. Poor Hindoos! They have ever been under the yoke, passive machines in whatever hand chose to wield them.

There is a tendency in human nature to give to the most extravagant notions the appearance of a philosophy, and to error, the form of a superior wisdom, as soon as it ministers to man's selfish purposes. These attempts are the more dangerous, the more they *conceal* the false reasonings and erroneous inferences from the beginning of the argument. This is especially the case with regard to the doctrine of Emanation and Metempsychosis, upon which the whole system of Hindoo Theology and morality is founded.

We shall attempt, therefore, to expose some of those false reasonings, by which the learned Brahmin seeks to justify his pernicious dogmas.

The doctrine has been defended by the following propositions :—First, "*The whole spiritual life of man is a part of the deity.*" This allegation embodies the fundamental lie which poisons the whole system of Hinduism. The deity, being infinite, cannot be divided; we can only divide finite things into parts. If the life of man be part of the deity, then the deity is necessarily a finite creature. The true God cannot be divided, but remains always the same. The deity indeed operates, but this operation is as little a separation and division of his essence, as the artist has

divided himself when he produces a beautiful landscape. Equally false is the proposition that man's whole life is a part of the deity; for our life consists of spirit, soul, and body, and the soul has nothing to do with the divinity, because, like the spirit, it is corrupted by error and sin. Our spirit indeed descends from God, but this spirit is essentially different from the Spirit of God, it is not a part, but a dependent creature of the same. Again, our spirit, in connexion with the soul, is defiled and impure by reason of sin, and can only be purified again by the blood of Jesus and the Spirit of God. Were our spirit indeed part of the deity, God would participate in the corruption of our spirit, and, still more, he would be the very source of evil!

Again, we are told *that these parts of the deity have indeed been separated from the essence of God; but, notwithstanding this division and separation, they remain essential parts of the great Spirit that animates the universe.* This is a necessary consequence of the preceding assertion; but is false in all its parts and bearings as soon as the other has been proved to be false. More than this, the above assertion embodies a direct contradiction, which it will be impossible for any learned Hindoo to reconcile. It is maintained that the several parts of the deity were severed from each other by the individualities which it comprehends, but that they are, notwithstanding, belonging to the Soul of the world, and constitute the

same. But if these parts are separated from God, then they cannot be united to him, for this would involve a contradiction. If they are separated, then the deity is divided—*i.e.*, discontinues to be God. If these parts, on the contrary, constitute one and the same deity, then their individuality has not separated them from God. Thus the attempt to divide the deity implies a very strange contradiction. If the essence of the Supreme Deity be split and divided into a thousand individualities, then we have left no world; we have a God, who is the world, and we have a world, which is God. In other words, our Religion thus ends in a gross and grovelling materialism.

Again, it is maintained that *the single parts of the emanated deity, which have transpired into individualities, are to be considered as excluded parts which are imprisoned in matter, and they are therefore to be considered in a suffering condition!*

Here, also, we have a confusion of erroneous views and words heaped together. Whilst the former of these propositions still regards the individualised parts of the deity as a whole, the present looks upon them not only as separate, but as excluded and imprisoned in matter. Hence it would follow that matter is stronger than God; for the weaker can only be kept by the stronger one. Body, or matter, is able to lay in fetters the Spirit, which is part of the deity! This contradiction dissolves every true notion of the deity, and has its origin in the opinion that the human soul is part of the deity.

Hence it would further follow, that God, according to this system, is in a suffering condition, for the deity being divided in millions of creatures, his parts are suffering in captivity, and thus God is himself a being which is imprisoned in matter; matter has everywhere overcome the intelligence of the divine Spirit! Against such absurd conclusions common-sense loudly protests. Such a proposition contradicts every experience. If we are to understand that the divine parts residing in creation are the living, moving, and agitating principles which are peculiar to each creature, then we cannot say that this principle of life is overcome by matter, and put in a suffering condition. If this were the case, all life would be extinguished, and death rule supremely over all. But we are well aware, that the principle of life in every individuality, be it spiritual, psychical, animal, or physical, is the ruling power, and not the one overruled, whilst matter is the passive part in every province of creation. If such were not the true case, nothing could live and move; nothing could grow.

Again, the original quality and quantity of the divine part is said to be never changed in all its transmigrations, which affect only the body, but not its occupant. Now, the essence of the deity is originally one and the same, before it appears in the emanations. God manifests himself in every part that emanates according to the wish of the deity. The first body was the original abode of the divine Soul, which, at a subsequent period, by the individual's own fault,

was reduced and degenerated. The soul wanders into an inferior body, until at last it reaches the lowest degree that can be attained through millions of transmigrations. But the form only is changed. The Soul is the same, and remains at all times the same until it is reunited to God. This again contradicts sound reason and common-sense. It is against our experience, void of every authority, and opposed to all we know, and feel, and see, and hear, and acknowledge. It dissolves the difference between creatures which we observe to exist, as to their spiritual or animal life; we should have the same intellect and feeling in the tree or the worm as we have in the form of a man! Thus the dignity of human nature is abolished; all thought, knowledge, and human activity is fettered by the gross error, which makes it unlawful to make use of certain creatures which are supposed to be inhabited by a deity.

It is hence further maintained, that the more the body dominates over the divine Soul, the more is the latter put into a state of suffering. Disengagement, therefore, of all the impressions of sense, entire separation from the body, destruction of bodily feelings, upon all occasions, an absolute abstraction of the mind, is the highest duty a man can ever perform, in order to obtain absorption into the Supreme Spirit. If the first proposition be true, the truth of this one follows. The consequence is fearful in the extreme, and leads to the wildest excess of a heated imagination. There is,

indeed, a power in the body which is opposed to the Spirit of God. But the spiritual part of man is neither as pure and undefiled as the Hindoo believes, nor is the body so vile and accursed as he would have it. According to reason, experience, and revelation, we must look for the germ of evil deeper than the body only. The body, indeed, is sinful, but the human soul also is polluted; its tendency is towards that which is evil. If, therefore, man be ever cured, the cure must begin not with the body, but with the soul. If the fountain be cured, the waters will be cured also.

Again, it is argued, that the moral liberty of man is calculated to preserve the soul pure in its wanderings from the vile influence of the body. We do not see how man gets into possession of this free will. We suppose it is brought in, as it were, by stealth, to remedy the fearful confusion just mentioned. According to the above view, we have the divine soul, and the body of matter; the former is captive and passive, the latter is dominant. Both are engaged in a severe conflict. How and wherefrom the free will comes in, we cannot conceive, nor are we told. It is not in the body, for the body is the enemy; it is not in the divine Soul, for this is suffering. We are, then, unable to see where this free will comes from, and what it has to do with the subject in question.

Finally, it is alleged that the soul transmigrates through millions of stages, with a view to be purified from its leprosy; and being purified, the Spirit of man

will at length obtain final emancipation. Even not taking into consideration the foolish doctrine of Metempsychosis, this doctrine contains contradictions of an enormous description. The question naturally is, from what shall man be purified? According to the Hindoo system, the divine part in man is pure and holy, although passive and captive. This part in man, therefore, which emanated from God, needs no purification, as arising from transmigration. The seat of impurity is supposed to be in the body, and the indwelling sensuality. But how shall that be removed, when the soul leaves the defiled body at death, and transmigrates into another body? In this new body nothing enters but the part of the divine being which is the soul of men. Now, either transmigration fails to produce the desired effect, or the evil is seated far deeper than the body. If the transmigrating soul is infected with the evil, as a part of the deity, then God must be possessed by this evil quality. Thus we are again thrown into confusion.

We feel that we have scarcely touched upon the leading items of the complicated and interminable system of the natural Religion of the Hindoos. Instead, however, of descending into the horrible pits of a most beastly superstition, we shall conclude the present subject with a few more remarks respecting the philosophical speculations of Hinduism respecting religious matters.

We have already seen that the compilers of the

hymns of the Vedas were immersed in a grovelling worship of the elements of nature. The successors of the composers of the Vedas found themselves enveloped in a polytheistic nature-worship. They strove to recover the doctrine of Monotheism, and to correct the debasing notions of the deity which their more imaginative and less philosophical predecessors had formed from their rude natural feelings of dependence upon something supernatural and divine. New discoveries in the physical world, and the wider expansion of the intellectual faculties, suggested that the natural elements of fire, and water, and the air, could not be the great unknown deity which their mind spontaneously longed after. Philosophy now had to correct the ancient belief, which was sanctioned by the recollections of revered ancestors. Different theories were invented, harmonizing their speculations with the more ancient worship of the elements. But the delusive chart of the speculations of unaided reason led them into errors more monstrous than the elemental worship. They magnified the great Spirit, and asserted his claims to the worship of his creatures; but not understanding what may be called his personality, they adored him as the all-prevailing soul of the universe in that Pantheistic sense of the term to which we have already alluded, and which renders every creature a portion of the deity.

The impetus which religious philosophy imparted to the Hindoo mind, brought forth a variety of religious philosophical systems. But none of them was able to

overcome the worship of the elements of nature, which the Vedas enjoin, and the fabrication of images which some of their most venerated sages had subsequently encouraged and tolerated. They were anxious to rectify the mistakes of the Vedas, but they would at the same time preserve their authority.

All the different systems of Hindoo philosophy agree in regard to the essential unity of the deity; but they cannot with propriety be said to recognise a God at all. According to all the different systems, Brahm, the great incomprehensible Spirit, existed from all eternity in a state of most profound repose, utterly unconscious even of his own existence. Hindoo philosophy recognises only an eternal and indestructible *thing*,* a *thing* without beginning and without end, a thing possessed of the most extraordinary and contradictory qualities, but possessed of no moral attributes whatever. That *thing* comprehends all that exists; and it does so either as the seed comprehends the plant, or as the plant comprehends its several parts. In this latter state, it is no bigger than an atom; it is, they say, "impenetrable to a needle's point." It lies motionless and unconscious in the silent and dark abyss, where there is neither earth, nor sea, nor sky, neither element nor life, neither mind nor matter. In this state Brahm remains for a long, long night. The years of its fated continuance, however, at last

* Brahm, even in a grammatical point of view, is of the neuter gender in the Sanscrit language.

fulfil their regular course; and the atom which had remained in an unconscious and dreamless repose for millions of ages, becomes conscious and awake, and says or thinks: "I am." No sooner is this imagination conceived, than it expands into the enormous bulk of fourteen worlds, seven, including the earth, above, and seven, exclusive of the earth, below. It expands at the same time into every shape, and form, and species of being. It becomes gods, demigods, angels and devils, men and animals, vegetables, metals, stones. It becomes a huge, illimitable being, whose eyes are the sun and moon, whose hairs are the trees of the forests, whose veins are rivers, whose nails are rocks, and whose bones are mountains. These, however, being periodically absorbed, and disappearing in consequence, are not regarded by the wise as having any real existence; the only real existing thing is the atom of which they are an expansion; and the well-informed Hindoo does not consider himself, or his wife, or his children, as having any individual existence, or bearing any relation to each other, but merely as illusory manifestations of the one imperishable thing. He feels, indeed, that he is apt to imagine that he is somebody, and that he has hands and feet of his own, and a wife and children that are said to belong to him; but his better judgment rebukes him in this, and tells him that it is an imagination, and nothing more. The day of illusion is equal to the night of stern and dark reality. And when the ages of the long day have completed their

circuit, and its evening has come, all beings rush amain into that simplicity out of which its morning called them; all earths are reduced to the earthy principle; all waters to the watery principle; all fire to the fiery principle; all airs to the aërial principle; all spaces to the principle of space. These five principles are again reduced to one great principle; and that one principle is absorbed in the essence of the one imperishable thing. All bodies are thus, by a speedy process of reduction, resolved into that essence, and all souls find a still speedier and simpler resolution; so that gods, and men, and animals, and vegetables, and minerals; earth, and sea, and sky; sun, moon, and stars; fire, wind, and space itself, shrink away into more and more general forms of being, till nought but one thing is left, and that is the unconscious and imperceptibly minute particle, of which a description has already been given.

The whole history of the several systems of philosophy is the history of an attempt to blot out the name and character of God from the universe. Yet the attempt has not entirely succeeded. Even the Hindoo mind, corrupted as it is by a false philosophy, retains a reason and conscience, which tell him other things. It is true the lower classes have taken hold of the results of this philosophy; the meanest day-labourer will tell us that God speaks within him, and none other; but although he is taught that he himself is God, he cannot help feeling that he is a man and a

creature. Although the Hindoo is taught that God is a thing, he cannot help thinking that he is a person. And although he is taught that he is not responsible for his own actions, he cannot help thinking the contrary.

After considering some of the brightest flowers of Oriental speculation respecting divine things, and after having purposely abstained from entering into any of the abominable chambers of imagery, we shall now ask our readers what they consider of the estimate of an English Divine respecting this system of natural Religion, when he compares it to a "*beautiful and radiant cherub from heaven, bearing on his persuasive lips the accents of pardon and peace, and on his silken wings satisfaction and blessing.*" We must honour truth wherever it be found; but alas! for the "cup of the fornication" of the great whore, the woman arrayed in purple and searlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones, having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication! How long will some of our wise men cry, with a loud voice, "*Great is Diana of the Ephesians!*" The kings of the earth, the princes of philosophy, the heroes of literature, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning; when they see "another angel" than "*the beautiful and radiant cherub from heaven*" come down from heaven, having great power, the earth being lightened with his glory; and when, instead of "*bearing*

on his persuasive lips the accents of pardon and peace, and on his silken wings satisfaction and blessing," he will cry mightily with a strong voice, saying: "*Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth, is fallen, is fallen!*"

Christianity has been most effectual in reclaiming barbarous nations; in diffusing science, peace, literature, and civilization; in subduing cruel and unnatural customs even in India, and in introducing mildness, charity, and benevolence; whilst Hinduism has led the nation backward in science, knowledge, and civilization! Not only was human reason unable to preserve the Hindoos from falling into "*vanity of mind*" to a most alarming extent, respecting heavenly things, but even in scientific and earthly concerns it has evidently very far swerved from the paths of soberness and truth; and this, after science has been made a branch of Hindoo Theology! There is something novel to the Christian mind in this amalgamation of scientific matters with religious truth. If we look at Hinduism, a number of discordant and disproportioned elements present themselves at every turn. The artificial means by which its philosophic supporters have vainly endeavoured to preserve its unity, serve only to betray the genuine impotency of the system. Opinions against opinions, theories against theories, definition upon definition, have been fastened on its unshapen form. The Rishis despising all external aids of knowledge, and trusting to their

imagination alone, propounded systems without number, embracing a wide range of sacred and profane, spiritual and physical topics. Thus we have astronomy, geography, chemistry, natural philosophy, metaphysics, anatomy, logic, and history, all linked together with theological subjects, and set forth in melodious strains of poetry by the repetition of which the Hindoo is to obtain final beatitude!

Physical sciences are not a fit subject for revelation. There can be no point imagined short of communication of Omniscience, at which such a revelation might have stopped without imperfections or omissions. A revelation of so much only of astronomy as was known to Copernicus, would have seemed imperfect after the discoveries of Newton, and a revelation of the science of Newton would have appeared defective to La Place. A revelation of all the chemical knowledge of the eighteenth century would have been as deficient in comparison with the information of the present day, as what is *now* known in this science will probably appear before the termination of another age. In the whole circle of sciences there is not one to which this argument may not be extended, unless we should acquire a full disclosure of all the mysterious agencies that uphold the mechanism of the material world.

Such a revelation, however, might have been suited to a different class of beings from that of our species. But unless human nature had been constituted other-

wise than it is, the communication of such omniscience would have been imparted to creatures utterly incapable of receiving it, and would have been also at variance with the design of all the divine revelations of God himself, the end of which has uniformly been, not to impart scientific, but moral and intellectual knowledge. The Hindoos have greatly erred in this matter. As a human production their religious system is interwoven with the national history, the national character, with their habits, their amusements, their general learning and literature, their political and domestic institutions. The language of their sacred books is the language of the Deity, the magnificent remains of antique architecture are considered the works of the gods. Everything assumes a religious character, and goes forth under the sanction of divinity. All these things are to be regarded as part and parcel of the Hindoo Religion, and wherever we demolish a member of their body of profane knowledge, and exhibit their "inspired" nonsense in its nakedness, we demolish and expose a member of their body of divinity.

In every department of Hindoo knowledge, there is a perpetual tendency to run out into the vast, the huge, the extravagant. Nothing seems worthy of being stated, unless it has incredible magnitude to recommend it. The more anything transcends the bounds of nature and of truth, the greater is the gravity with which it is asserted, and the more unquestioning the credulity with which it is received.

When time is calculated, nought will suffice but millions and hundreds of millions of years. When earth is measured, we must have millions and hundreds of millions of miles. When armies and battles are described, there must be introduced on the field of action millions and hundreds of millions of soldiers and elephants. The period of human life seldom extends, even in extreme cases, much beyond a hundred years. The Mythology of the Hindoos stretches it to ten thousand years! The progeny of a single individual rarely exceeds ten children; but the Hindoo historians assert that King Sagar had sixty thousand sons born in a pumpkin, nourished in pans of milk, and reduced to ashes by the curse of a saint! Nature has endowed men with two arms and one face. The Hindoos have assigned to some of their heroes twenty arms, and ten faces. Our earth is declared to be "circular or flat, like the flowers of the water lily, in which the petals project beyond each other." Its habitable portion consists of seven circular islands, or continents, each surrounded by a different ocean. The central, or metropolitan, island, destined to be the abode of man, is named Yamba Dweep, around which rolls the sea of salt water; next follows the second circular island, and around it the sea of sugar-cane-juice; then the third, and around it the sea of spirituous liquor; then the fourth, and around it the sea of clarified butter; then the fifth, and around it the sea of sour curds; then the sixth, and around it the

sea of milk; then the seventh and last, and around it the sea of sweet water! Beyond this last ocean is an uninhabited country of pure gold, so prodigious in extent, that it equals all the islands with their accompanying oceans in magnitude. It is begirt with a boundary wall of stupendous mountains, which enclose within their bosom realms of everlasting darkness. The central island, the destined habitation of the human race, is several hundred miles in diameter, and the sea that surrounds it is of the same breadth. The second island is double the diameter of the first, and so is the sea that surrounds it. And each of the remaining islands and seas, in succession, is double the breadth of its immediate predecessor. So that the diameter of the whole earth amounts to several hundred thousand millions of miles; occupying a portion of space of manifold larger dimensions than that which actually intervenes between the earth and the sun! Yea, if we could stretch our imagination to conceive of a circular mass of solid matter, whose diameter exceeded that of the orbit of Herschel, the most distant planet in our solar system, such a mass would not equal in magnitude the earth of the Hindoo-Mythologico-Geographers, who were taught the science by divine authority! In the midst of this almost immeasurable plain, from the very centre of Yamba Dweep, shoots up the highest mountain, Su-Meroo, the Abborti of the Persians, of the height of six hundred thousand miles, in the form of an inverted pyramid,

having its summit, which is two hundred times broader than the base, surmounted by three swelling cones, the highest of these cones transpiercing the upper vacancy with three golden peaks, on which are situate the favourite residences of the Hindoo triad. At its base, like so many giant sentinels, stand four lofty hills, on each of which grows a mango tree, several thousand miles in height, bearing fruit delicious as nectar, and of the enormous size of many hundred cubits. From these mangoes, as they fall, flows a mighty river of perfumed juice, so communicative of its sweetness, that those who partake of it exhale the odour from their persons all around to the distance of many leagues! There also grow rose-apple trees, whose fruit is "*large as elephants,*" and whose juice is so plentiful, as to form another mighty river, that converts the earth over which it passes into purest gold! This is a brief geographical outline, furnished by their sacred writings, of the earth on which we dwell.

The world is often said to consist of three worlds, heaven above, earth below, and the interambient ether. In a minuter division it is usually partitioned into fourteen worlds, seven inferior, and seven superior, consisting, with the exception of our own earth, which is the first, of immense tracts of space, bestudded with glorious luminaries and habitations of the gods, rising, not unlike the rings of Saturn, one above the other, as so many concentric zones, or belts, of almost measureless extent. Of the seven inferior worlds,

which dip beneath our earth in a regularly descending series, it is needless to say more, than that they are destined to be the abodes of all manner of wicked and loathsome creatures. The first of the ascending series being the earth, the second world is that which immediately over-vaults the earth, and is the region of space between us and the sun, which is declared, on divine authority, to be distant only a few hundred thousand miles. The third in the upward ascent, is the region of space intermediate between the sun and the polar star. Within this region are all the planetary and stellar mansions. The distances of the heavenly bodies are given with the utmost precision. The moon is placed beyond the sun, as far as the sun is from the earth. Next succeed at equal distances from each other, and in the following order, the stars, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Ursa Major, and the Pole Star. The four remaining worlds beyond the Pole Star, continue to rise one above the other at immense and increasing intervals. The entire circumference of the celestial space is then given with the greatest exactitude of numbers. The worlds above this earth are peopled with gods and goddesses, demigods, and genii, the sons and grandsons, daughters and grandaughters of Brahma, and other superior deities. All the superior deities have heavens for themselves. The inferior deities chiefly dwell in the heaven of Indra. There they congregate to the number of three hundred and thirty millions. The

gods are divided and subdivided into classes, which vary through every conceivable gradation of rank and power. They are of all colours, some black, some white, some red, some blue, and so through all the blending shades of the rainbow. They exhibit all sorts of shape, size, and figure; in forms wholly human, or half human, wholly brutal, or variously compounded, like many-headed and many-bodied centaurs,—with four, or ten, or six hundred, or a thousand, eyes, heads, and arms. They ride on all sorts of etherialized animals, elephants, buffaloes, lions, deer, sheep, goats, peacocks, vultures, geese, serpents, and rats! They hold forth in their multitudinous arms all manner of offensive and defensive weapons, thunderbolts, scimitars, javelins, spears, clubs, bows, arrows, shields, flags, and shells. They discharge all possible functions. They are gods of the heavens above, of the earth below, and of the region under the earth; gods of wisdom and gods of folly; gods of war and gods of peace; gods of good and of evil; gods of pleasure and love, gods of wrath and revenge. All the virtues and all the vices of men; all allotments of life,—beauty, jollity, and sport; the hopes and fears of youth; the felicities and infelicities of manhood; the joys and sorrows of old age; all are common to them, and all are placed under their presiding influence.

But to return to our immediate subject. All the planets revolve round the sun at different distances.

Mercury is nearest to the sun; Venus next, the earth next, and next in order are Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and Uranus respectively. Venus has a larger circuit to perform around the sun than Mercury, and takes longer time to perform it. And so with Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and Uranus, whose circuits and periods of revolution exceed each other in the order in which they have been enumerated. The Hindoos, however, tell us of sad misfortunes that happened to Saturn in his young days, by which he became lame. His fond mother, the wife of the sun, could not bear her husband's excessive heat, and ran away to her father Paulastya, to make a complaint on the subject. He advised her to repair to the forest, to perform austerities, and in the mean time to substitute Chaya in her own place by the side of her husband. Saturn, as might have been expected, was not overfond of his stepmother, and one day went so far as to give her a kick. This she bitterly resented by a curse, to the effect, that his legs might be destroyed. This immediately took place; the boy lost his legs, and he has been able only to creep ever since! Now, if Saturn be maimed, and in consequence creeps slowly along, Uranus is nearly three times more a cripple than he, and it would be well to hear what has happened to him; and to Jupiter, who has his measure of lameness too; and to Mercury, the swiftest of the planets, compared with the moon. It is on account of a planet's greater distance from the sun, that it moves more

slowly than its neighbour. Were they to change places, they would change paces too. We shall add a few more instances with regard to the notions of the Hindoos in Astronomy.

The Brahmins declare that most of the fixed stars, as well as the planets, are of their own caste. All the stars in the Great Bear are Brahmins, and the *Polar Star* is a Brahmin too. It was on account of his resolute spirit, and his fixed abandonment of all mutable things, that the last-mentioned personage was exalted to that station which he now holds. It was an immovable place he desired; and as the story goes, an immovable place he obtained. They do not appear to have known that the other stars move quite as little as the polar star; that its apparent fixedness is owing to its being opposite to the pole of the earth. It is because the pole of the earth does not move, that the star opposite to it does not appear to move; and had the pole of the earth happened to point to any other star, that star would have been the one which would have appeared fixed. The poles of the planets are not opposite to what we call the pole star; and hence, to the inhabitants of those planets, that star appears to move, while other stars appear fixed.

It is natural to suppose that the revolutions and phases of the moon were settled by God at the creation, and that they have continued to this day as they were fixed at first. If, however, we may believe Brighu, the moon did not wax and wane at the

beginning, but was afterwards subjected to these vicissitudes, by a Brahmin. Daksha, it is said, cursed the moon, and by his curse afflicted it with *consumption!* The alleviation of this curse, with which it was favoured, was that it should be afflicted with a consumptive disease for fifteen days, and recover its bulk during the same period. According to a different account, the Brahmins, denominated progenitors, live in or near the moon; of their days and nights each is composed of fifteen common days. Now, when awake, these holy Brahmins cut the moon into slices, and eat them up; and the moon recovers its former dimensions while they sleep!

Again; when the gods of the Hindoos felt the workings of mortality, they assembled in full council on Mount Su-Meroo, and it was resolved to search for Amrita, or the ambrosial nectar of immortality, in order to exempt them "from grey hairs, wrinkles, old age, and infirmities!"

The ocean was now to be churned to discover the nectar; Mount Mander served for a pivot, a great serpent for a rope, and the moon for a churning stick. After the gods and demi-gods had rolled it to and fro for a thousand years with all their might, the serpent, which was used for a rope, being distressed, vomited poison, which came forth like fire to burn them to ashes. Indra and his gods, being affrighted, called upon Shiva, the "wearer of snakes," who swallowed the poison, and removed their distress. Shiva returned to Koilasu, and the gods again churned the ocean with pleasure.

Then appeared gems, yielding all kind of treasure on being touched; a white elephant, a white horse, the divine cow, the goddess Lukshmi, and, last of all, the nectar! Vishnoo was to distribute it among the gods; but, before giving the nectar, he thought, The Azuras are naturally strong and wicked, and if they eat the nectar, they will become immortal, and distress the world more than ever. Vishnoo assumes the form of a beautiful female, with every accomplishment, who displayed herself meretriciously before the gods and Azuras. The Azuras were overcome with admiration; while the gods, knowing the stratagem to entice the Azuras, did not indulge their senses. Vishnoo made this female to divide the ambrosia, giving into her hand a golden pot, and a spoon. Two of the Azuras came to the feast in disguise of gods, and they ate with them of the nectar. They were soon discovered, and informed against by *the sun and moon*, who are supposed to be animated beings. Vishnoo, having again assumed his proper form, and being in a great rage, he immediately cut off their heads with the spoon. Their bodies perished, but as the nectar had descended as low as their necks, their heads were immortal. Having ascended into the heavens as two serpents, called Rahoo and Ketoo, and performed penance, they obtained power to revenge themselves upon *the sun and moon at certain seasons by taking them into their mouths!* By occasionally attempting to devour them, they *occasion solar and lunar eclipses!*

According to a law impressed by the wise Creator

of all things, one thing is made to attract the other; the heavenly bodies affect our globe, and especially the liquid part of it, in the same manner. We find, accordingly, that the moon draws up the sea towards itself, and thus occasions a fulness of water in one place, and a deficiency in another. And, again, when the sun and moon are in one line with the earth, as at the time of the new and full moon, the water is still more drawn up, and there is a greater fulness and deficiency than usual. This appears to be a very natural and rational account of the *tides of the ocean.* The Hindoos, however, relate with gravity, that a certain Brahmin was so enraged at the military tribe, for their attempt to destroy him and all his race, that he desired to consume men, giants, gods, and all! They inform us, that this Brahmin being intreated by Brahma to quench his wrath, replied, that it was utterly insatiable, and that it must have something or other to consume. The sea, it was thought, would satisfy and cool his anger. Assuming the head of a mare, the Brahminical wrath retired to the ocean, and every day vomiting flames out of his mouth, it burnt up the great deep to the extent of eight hundred miles! When the Hindoos see the phosphoric appearance of the waters of the waves of the sea at night, they conclude that the story of the mare-fire is correct.

Not more skilful seem the Hindoos in the departments of Natural Philosophy and Physiology. There are ten winds lodged in various parts of the body,

some of which cause respiration, laughter, weeping, cough, sneezing, and hickups. One of them remains in the head three days after death, when it bursts the head, and escapes through the cleft. All these winds are saluted most solemnly whilst the Hindoo performs his ablutions !

When nourishment is received into the body, it undergoes, according to the chief of inspired sages, a threefold distribution, according to its fineness or coarseness; corn and other terrenæ become flesh; the coarser particles are rejected, whilst the finer nourish *the mind!* Water is chiefly converted into blood; part of the element is ejected, the finer part supports the breath ! Oil and other combustible substances, deemed igneous, become marrow; the coarser part is deposited as bone, and the finer supplies the faculty of speech ! Again; a hundred and one arteries flow from the heart, and one of them passes to the crown of the head. It is along this artery that the liberated soul, whose proper abode is the heart, makes its escape. From the crown of the head it passes along a sun-beam, through various regions, to the sun. Thence it proceeds to the moon, which is far beyond the sun ! If it is to be rewarded with absorption, it advances from the moon to the region of lightning, which is far beyond the moon ! Thence, again, to the realm of Varuna, the region of water; and all these are far beyond the moon, which, as has been already mentioned, is again far beyond the sun ! At length, if it

have sufficient merit, the soul arrives at the realm of Indra, the abode of Brahm!

In order to wind up these learned absurdities, we shall only allude to a few more instances. If we speak to a literate Hindoo about the peculiar formation of the serpent, by which it is enabled to move, he will tell us that he has feet, although they are carefully concealed below his skin. If we describe to him the serpent's ears as wanting the outer cartilage which is generally attached to that organ, he will reprove our ignorance by telling us that the serpent has no ears at all, but hears with its eyes! The age of the snake is calculated at a thousand years, and every century it throws off its skin once.

Again; every observing person will have noticed the small horny excrescences that appear a little above the fore legs, and a little below the hind legs, of the horse. They are formed by secretions from the skin, and resemble the nails and warts of the human body. The holy Religion of the Hindoos teaches, that the horses had wings in former days; that these wings were clipped, and that the four marks referred to are standing evidences of the correctness of the statement!

But not only the horses, the hills and mountains too were endowed with volatile powers. Mountains were flying about like birds, in former days, and sometimes perching upon a city or village, they naturally overwhelmed everything.

Indra, the god of the heavens, was annoyed at such

a display of wanton injuries, and, in order to resent this conduct of theirs, he clipped their wings, and they dropped down every one on the place where they are now! The same persons who hold that mountains were formed with wings, believe that they were placed on the earth as weights to keep it steady, or inserted into the earth as nails to fasten it! How they could serve both these purposes is hard to conceive. These difficulties, however, do not perplex the sages of Hindostan, inasmuch as with great gravity and self-satisfaction they relate long stories involving still greater difficulties than these. Let one more instance suffice, according to which a certain giant on a certain occasion folded up the earth like a piece of paper, and flung it into the sea! Guardians are now placed in every quarter of the heavens, to prevent his doing so again!

Before we conclude our desultory remarks on the merits of the natural Religion of the Hindoos, we shall finally give an illustration of its practical influence upon the social and domestic relations in life. It will be recollected that the girls are married when they are perfect children. And as it is an unpardonable crime for a Parsee girl to refuse marriage until she is eighteen or twenty years of age, so among the Hindoos the divine laws censure the delay of her marriage beyond the tenth year of her age.

As regards the choice of the partner of his life, the young Hindoo is furnished in one of the sacred Pooranas with the following admonition: "The youth, if

he marry, must select a maiden who is of a third of his age, one who has not too much hair, but is not without any; one who is not very black nor yellow complexioned, and who is not from birth a cripple or deformed. He must not marry a girl who is vicious or unhealthy, of low origin, or labouring under disease. He is not to marry one who has been ill brought up, or one who talks improperly, or one who inherits some malady from father or mother. He is not to wed one who has a beard, or one who is of a masculine appearance, or one who speaks thick or thin, or croaks like a raven. He is not to marry a girl who keeps her eyes shut, or that has very prominent eyes, or one who has hairy legs, or thick angles, or one who has dimples in her cheeks when she laughs. Let not a wise man wed a girl of such a description; nor let a considerate man marry a girl of a harsh skin, or one with white nails, or one with red eyes, or with very fat hands and feet; or one who is a dwarf, or one who is very tall; or one whose eyebrows meet, or whose teeth are far apart, and resemble tusks. Let him not marry a girl that bears the name of a constellation, of a river, of a barbarous nation; or that has the name of a mountain, of a winged creature, of a snake, of a slave; or with any name raising an image of terror! Let a householder marry a maiden who is in kin at least five degrees remote from his mother, and seven from his father, with the ceremonies enjoined by the law."

After having made the choice of his bride in the

above manner, the nuptials are celebrated. There are eight different rituals prescribed for the occasion. We shall confine ourselves to describe one of these rituals, which is now in use.

Previous to marriage, the father of the bride sits down to await the bridegroom's arrival in the apartment chosen for that purpose, and at the time chosen for it according to the rules of astrology. The jewels and other presents intended for him, are placed there; a *cow* is tied on the northern side of the apartment, and a cushion and other furniture are arranged. On his approach, the bride's father rises to welcome him, and recites the following prayer, while the bridegroom stands before him: "*May she who supplies oblations for religious worship, who constantly follows her calf, and who was the milkcow in the days of Yama, abound with milk, and fulfil our wishes year after year.*" The bridegroom is then presented with a cushion; and then are rehearsed by him some prayers addressed to the moon. After this he receives water for ablution, and under ejaculations washes his feet, with petitions to Varuna. After he has partaken of honey, curds, and clarified butter, presents are exchanged, and chiefly given to the bridegroom. The cow tied at the end of the apartment is let loose, and a prayer addressed to her by the bridegroom to expiate his sins! Previous to the arrival of the bridegroom, the bride bathes, during the recital of several prayers addressed to the god of love, to the primeval sages, and other

objects. When they are both brought together, the bride's right hand is placed on his right hand, both having been previously rubbed with turmeric, or some other auspicious drug. A matron must bind both hands with cusa grass, amidst the sound of cheering music. The bride's father takes a vessel of water containing sesamum and cusa grass, and pours it on the hands of the bride and bridegroom, whilst he utters the words, "*God the existent!*" Having repeated at full length the names and designations of the bridegroom, of the bride, and of himself; and having solemnly declared that he will give him the damsel adorned with jewels, the father of the bride ties a knot with the skirts of the bride's and bridegroom's mantles, saying, "*Ye must be inseparably united in matters of duty, wealth, and love.*" The bridegroom on this recites a text to the effect that love gave her, that to love she was given; that love was the giver, and love the taker; and that with love he would enjoy her. While the couple thus affianced walk forth, the husband admonishes his young wife to *be gentle in aspect, loyal to her husband, to be fortunate in cattle, amiable in mind, and beautiful in person; to be mother of valiant sons, fond of delights; to be cheerful, and bring prosperity to their bipeds and quadrupeds.* After some other ceremonies, the bridegroom causes the bride to be clothed with a scarf, whilst the words are recited: "Mayest thou reach old age. Put on this raiment. Be chaste, be lovely. Live a hundred years.

Preserve and obtain beauty, wealth, and male offspring." Then they say: "May the assembled gods unite our hearts; may the waters unite them. May air unite us. May the Creator unite us. May the god of love unite us!"

After many and various oblations and prayers to the sun, the moon, the elements, and other ceremonies, such as pouring water and clarified butter over the hands of each other, they assemble again by starlight, the bride seated on the red hide of a bull, and the bridegroom seating himself near her, he makes six oblations, while he names the three worlds as usual, and each time pours of the remainder of the clarified butter on the bride's head. He obviates by this full oblation all ill marks in the lines of her hands, in her eyelashes, in her air, in the spots on her body, and whatever is sinful in her looking or in her crying; he obviates all that may be sinful in her temper, in her speaking, or in her laughing; all ill marks in her teeth, and in the dark intervals between them; all ill marks in her hands and in her feet; on her thighs, haunches, &c., and on the lineaments of her figure. Whatever natural or accidental evils are in her limbs, he thus obviates with clarified butter! They both rise up; he shows her the polar star, and ejaculates: "*Heaven is stable; the earth is stable; this universe is stable; may this woman be stable also!*" After having pointed to his young wife the polar star as an emblem of stability, the young couple partake of a

meal together from the same plate, as the token of the closest union. But it will be rather startling to hear that, notwithstanding this close union, it is the first and the last time that they ever eat together. The privilege of the wife to eat with her husband is confined to her wedding meal!

With reference to their wedded life, which now follows, suffice it to advert to some sacred poetry, which will give the reader an idea of the estimation in which the wife is to be held. The husband receives the following injunction :—

> *"Preserve your wife, preserve your pelf,*
> *But give them both to save yourself!*
> *There is another wealth, another wife,*
> *But where is there another life?"*

The holy and learned Brahmin puts his wife into the same list as that of "goods and chattels," and the only relation in which he views her is that which she bears to his domestic comfort and convenience. She promotes these, and is a desirable acquisition because she does so; but individually considered, she is not absolutely necessary to secure them, for another can supply her place. But life is absolutely necessary, and cannot be renewed or substituted. All that he wants is enjoyment; his wife is not absolutely necessary to continue enjoyment,—not more than his house or clothes; therefore, he must sacrifice his wife to preserve himself. In the wife's mind, he supposes to exist quite the reverse feeling to his own. According

to his notions, she, instead of regarding her own enjoyment as the chief thing, will regard his as such. Instead of viewing him in the light of her own enjoyment, she takes quite an opposite view of the case. Instead of classing him with "goods and chattels," she will rank him with the gods—nay, she will set him above them all, for she will have no other god but him. Instead of giving him up to save her life, she will give herself up to save his; she will burn herself alive, because he is dead, and must be burned! So far from thinking of another husband during his lifetime, she will not think of another during the protracted term of her own, even although he may have died when she was only ten years old! She will, in short, devote herself, soul, body, and spirit to him; she will have no will but his, no affections but which terminate in him; but will receive none in return.

Now it so happens, that the love of a wife towards a husband does not come under the class of instinctive affections, like that of a mother. It is produced by moral causes, such as symmetry of form, congeniality of disposition, harmony of spirit, excellence of character, whether fancied or real, and love, either supposed, or seen, or hoped for. The Hindoo female is required to love her husband, although he may be the most ill-favoured of men. As for congeniality, she must even get on with the very opposite; she must love her appointed husband, though to her the most uncongenial and disagreeable of mortals. Instead of

looking to excellence of character, she has only to look to personal relation. Whatever her appointed husband may be to others, he is a god to her; impure, he is to her spotless; faithless, he is to her faithful; though cruel to her, she is to *think* him very kind; niggardly, he is to her liberal; foolish, he is to her wise and prudent; the vilest of men on earth, he is to her the most excellent of beings, whether on earth or in heaven. If love is to smooth and soften all these defects, she is in this, too, doomed to disappointment. Her husband is not to love her; he is to love himself, to approve or disapprove, seek or shun, keep or cast her away, just as she happens to minister to himself.

Now in the Christian Scriptures, as well as in the Hindoo laws and legends, the wife is enjoined to love her husband, to reverence her husband, to obey her husband, be subject to her husband in everything, as the Church is subject to Christ. But for the exercise of this great affection and devotedness, she is furnished with corresponding moral means. She is thus to love and devote herself to the husband of her choice, the man whose appearance and disposition of spirit and character all combined to engage her affections, and whose choice of her and love to her fixed them for ever. Her affection is not a vain unnatural effort of the will, but the sweet, and easy, and harmonious response of a loving heart. The influences from without are such as are fitted to act upon and move it; and choice, and love, and devotedness, are but the natural

expressions of the movements within. Is she to love him? He is also to love her as himself,—to love, and nourish, and cherish her as his own body. Is she to have no other love but him? He is also to love none besides her. Is she always to exhibit a meek and quiet spirit? He is also to love her and never be bitter against her. Is she to reverence him? He is to cultivate every excellence, and to do all that is calculated to call forth respect and esteem. Is she to devote herself to him, and be subject to him in everything, as the Church is subject to Christ? He is to love her even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for her. There are great ends, and at the same time great means, great affections, and also great and suitable objects to call them forth; great duties, and also great motives to yield the power of performing them. This constitution of things is like the constitution of the universe; it is like the work of God. The Hindoo constitution bears no such character. Its framers wish their wives to be, and feel, and do everything. All uncultivated as they leave them, they expect and require the fullest and happiest fruits; and as if to make up for all other deficiencies, they furnish them with orders and threats enough, and with high and glorious assumptions not a few. It is thus they idly and eagerly grasp at ends without means, affections without incentives, and performances without motives! Once more, we ask, can the words of an English divine have given a true estimate of the natural Religion

of the Hindoos, when he compared it to "a beautiful and radiant Cherub from heaven, bearing on his persuasive lips the accents of pardon and peace, and on his silken wings satisfaction and blessing?"

6. *Buddhism* is another branch of the natural Religion of the Pagan world, and that by no means one of the least important, it being the *Religion of nearly half the human race!* As Buddhism, however, is remarkable on account of its extent, so also when we consider its antiquity, its influence upon the customs, the government, and the constitution of Asiatic nations, and the powerful effects upon the minds of people resident in opposite climates. The Nomadic tribes of Central Asia, and the Tartars, acquired the arts of comparative civilization by its instrumentality. Buddhism appeals to the feelings of man; it is opposed to the exclusiveness and monopoly of an hereditary hierarchy, and boldly asserts the equality of all men; whilst the monastic system imparted vigour to its Missionaries. It united in former days the North and the South of India, Kashmir with Ceylon, in the bonds of one common faith. The Religion of Buddha not only divided with Brahmanism the empire of opinion for ages, within the limits of India proper, but it has reached an unparalleled extension beyond those limits of India in more recent times, which it has maintained up to the present day. It is probable, that during four or five centuries at least, Buddhism was as influential within the bounds of the Continent

of India as Brahmanism; and it is certain, that the period of its greatest influence was synchronous with the brightest era of the intellectual culture of that country. The Brahmins, themselves, attest again and again the philosophical acumen and the literary abilities of their rivals. Buddhism, at this hour, has religious sovereignty not only over the Highlands of Asia, but even over the countries beyond the Ganges; Birmah, Pegu, Assam, Arakan, Siam, Kambodia, Tonquin, Cochin-China, as well as over great part of the Chinese empire proper. The population of China has been estimated to be about three hundred and fifty millions; and it has been calculated that no less than three hundred, of the three hundred and fifty millions, are followers of the great Buddha! But these are not the bounds of its dominion. It gained the ascendency in Japan, Ava, the coast of Corea, the empire of the Mongols, Kalmuks, and over Great Tibet! If we inquire as to the origin of Buddhism, we are sadly at a loss; for the name of Buddha signifies nothing but a holy sage, a divine and wise man, who has raised himself to the height of a deity. According to Buddhistical notions, every one of the many worlds has its human and divine occupants; but it is the privilege of the world which we inhabit, to produce Buddhas, and which is, therefore, called the *happy world*. Every age has its own Buddha. In some ages, however, no person attains the perfection of Buddhahood; whilst in others, as many as four

or even five of them are produced. The Buddha of the present age is distinguished from his predecessors by the cognomen of Sakya. In common with other Buddhas, he is called the perfect sage; the destroyer of sin, the Omniscient, the chief of biped beings, the Lord of sages, the fortunate, or successful being, the Saviour, the possessor of eyes, the effulgent, the sapient, the deliverer of the world, the highest, the Supreme, the all-seeing being, the august progressor, the vanquisher of the five deaths, the man-lion or the supreme man, the chief of mankind, the King of Religion, the great sage, the God of gods, the teacher of the world, the supremely wise, and the chief of conquerors!

Shakya, or Sakya Muni, the Buddha of the present age, has left the seats of the gods, and descended in the form of the king of the elephants. He was born in the form of a rainbow, and was attended at his birth by Spirits. He spoke as soon as he was born, stood on his feet, and measured the globe in seven paces! At the age of seven he was instructed in all the fine arts suitable to his situation, but he soon outstrode his teachers. His holiness was, however, yet to be acquired upon earth. He was served by thirty-five virgins; in his young days, when he was awake, they endeavoured to entertain him by music and dancing. In beauty he was superior to any mortal, and the people gathered around him to satisfy their eyes. When grown up, he denied himself every enjoyment

of the royal glory around him; he felt the misery resting upon mankind, and retired to embrace an ascetic life. During his seclusion, he was fed by the king of monkeys, with figs and honey; one evening, however, whilst giving expression to his joy, by dancing and shouting, the poor monkey fell into the water, and was drowned! When Buddha reappeared amongst men, his grand theme of teaching was to inculcate contempt for the world, and the destruction of all changeable things. The Buddha in question, is regarded by the Brahmins as an incarnation of Vishnoo, and to have preached heretical doctrines.

Buddhism dissents from Brahmanism, by denying the inspiration of the Vedas, by rejecting the institution of caste, and by refusing to acknowledge the divinity of any of the sub-deities of the Brahmins. Whilst the deity of Brahmanism actively penetrates and moves all nature, the deity of Buddhism is an Epicurean principle, wrapped up in eternal repose; and the highest happiness attainable by man, is a condition of deliverance from all passion, suffering, or in the acquisition of absorption. Whilst Brahmanism destroys the very soul of moral feeling, and reduces man to a play of fantastic absurdities, the Buddhistical creed, on the other hand, exercises a sort of moral discipline upon the human nature, and hence it has come to pass, that some nations who were found savages, received a tinge of civilization. Admitting these differences, we find, on the other hand

that the grand essential principles of Buddhist and Brahminical religious speculations are the same.

In the first place, the existence of a Supreme Deity, distinct from the world, and creating and preserving the universe, was not one of the essential principles in either of the two leading systems of religious speculations in India.

Again; the great aim of philosophy among all sects was the liberation of the soul from the bonds of matter, and the dominion of the passions; thus putting an end to its transmigrations, when, according to the differing theories of different sects, it was either absorbed into the essence of deity, or into the great fountain of intellect, or entered on a state of ineffable bliss, unconcerned about what was transacting in the world of men. This was the great principle of their philosophy.

Again; the grand agent in this work was the soul itself, meditating on its own nature and dignity, ceasing from all efforts to conciliate deity, and other inferior gods, by sacrifices, or other works; and seeking to free itself from all worldly affections, by abstraction of thought; thus preparing the way for its final emancipation. This principle of Hindoo philosophy is next in importance to the preceding, and can scarcely be separated from it.

The Sanscrit words Moksha, Nirvana, Nivritti, meaning respectively, Liberation, Impassibility, Inaction, are the words commonly used by the Brahmins to express the highest state of bliss which the soul can

attain. The equivalents of these words in the Magadhi, Mookha, Nivvana, Nivvui, are those used by the Jains, a heretical sect of Buddhism, and the Buddhists themselves use in common the Pali words Mokho, Nibban, and Nibbooti, to express the same idea. In all of the systems, as we shall immediately see, meditation on spirit is the means of attaining to this state; and so the three philosophical schemes are one in their essential principles.

Every one acquainted with these subjects knows that of the six philosophical systems mentioned by the Brahmins, the principal is the Sankhya. In all of the Poorans, except the Bhagavad, it is the system adopted. Now there are two divisions of the Sankhya scheme of philosophy, the Theistical and Atheistical. It is true that the modern Hindoos reject the latter variety as heterodox; still, Theism is not essential to the system, or it could not admit of an atheistical school. The Vedanta system itself is, more properly, Pantheistical; inasmuch as, according to it, matter does not exist, and all the spirit that exists is only a part of the deity.

In Nepaul and Tibet, the prevailing system of Buddhism in the present day is that which admits of an Adi Buddha, as Supreme Deity, of five Dhyani Buddhas, his attendants, and of a multitude of Nirmankaya Buddhas, who have been manifested in this lower world, the last of these being Shakya, who, according to the Tibetans, appeared about a thousand

years before the Christian era, but, according to the Ceylonese, only about six hundred. In the Ceylonese system, with which that of Burma agrees, there is no Adi Buddha, nor any personage going under the name of Buddha, except those who have raised themselves by meditation to the state of Buddhahood. In Nepaul there are, also, sects holding similar sentiments, so that the doctrine of a Supreme Deity is not essential to the system of Buddhism.

The Jains, also, agreeing with the Ceylonese Buddhists, have no higher objects of worship than the twenty-four Tirthankaras, — sages who have raised themselves from manhood to godhead, and who remind us strongly of the twenty-four Yzeds of the Iranian fire-worshippers. Nor do the Jains admit of any other first cause, than Nature developing the world according to the principles eternally inherent in it. This is fully admitted by the Jains themselves, as well as imputed to them by others. In fact, how can proper Theism be the attribute of systems, all of which teach the sage that by his own efforts he can raise himself to equality with the Supreme God, if such a being exists, or put himself in a condition to supply his place, if there is previously no such being in the universe?

The state of emancipation is the end, the means to obtain it is mental effort.

In reference to the Brahminical doctrine, the following passages may be quoted :—"Works are prescribed for persons affected by ignorance, and other faults,

and not for the wise man skilled in the unity of spirit; therefore, it is said, that those go to the inferior heavens, while he ascends to that state of immortality, which consists in union with the Supreme." "Knowledge of the unity of spirit is attained by restraining every natural feeling and action, and ceasing to think that you are an agent or causer in anything, or that you have performed any action, or shall receive any punishment or reward."

To the same effect in the exposition of the Sankhya Philosophy, the summing up at the end is as follows: "By the attainment of perfect knowledge, virtue, and the things connected with it, produce no effects .... When separation of the informed soul from its corporeal frame at last takes place, and nature in respect of it ceases, then is absolute and final deliverance accomplished." The Jains also propose emancipation as the end after which the wise man aims, and meditation as the means by which he attains his end, as will sufficiently appear from the following passages, taken from one of the most sacred works of that sect :—

"Inflaming his mind with devotion, and seated on the heated earth, after a fast of three days without the use of water, engaged in abstract meditation, he attained infinite, incomparable, undecaying, unclouded, all-embracing, perfect, certain, supreme intelligence and perception."

After enjoying this state many years on earth, it is said that, at the time of his death "the bonds of decay

and death were cut asunder, and he entered on a state of perfect bliss, of freedom from care and passion, and of the absence of all pain."

In respect to the Buddhists, Csoma Koros, who lived several years in a Buddhist monastery in Tibet, and made a study of the language and literature of the Tibetans, declares "that the highest point of the Buddhistical philosophy among the Tibetans, is to regard as pain every bodily existence in whatever region of the world it be, to aspire to final emancipation, and wish to arrive at supreme perfection, that they may become able to help others in their miseries."

In one of the sacred works of Ceylon which have been rendered accessible, mention is made of a sage "arriving at the state of victory over the passions," in the prescribed course of "sanctified meditation."

Emancipation then as the end, and meditation as the means, are the sum and substance of the whole of the Brahminical, Jain, and Buddhistical philosophy.

The final deliverance, which is sought after in Buddhism, is, however, by no means a state of conscious bliss, nor yet of inert quiescence, but an absolute absorption and annihilation. Hence, the Buddhists only adore the memory, the images, and the relics of their Buddhas. They do not imagine them to be now existing; but they verily believe that they lost their intellectual entity upon finishing the transmigratory existence. What a fearful contrast this deliverance of

Buddhism to the highest interests and the dearest hopes of the Christian believer! How different the Christian's hope, *to be with the Lord for ever*, if compared with the monstrous ideas which have been conceived by the unassisted speculations of man's natural Religion!

The redemption of man being the problem, which Buddhism, like every other religious delusion, attempts to solve, it will be of some interest to make a few remarks upon the method and the process by which it is thought to be accomplished; and we shall chiefly be guided by the statements of one of the most learned Buddhist priests that lived at Ceylon. According to Buddhist notions, metempsychosis and redemption are one and the same thing. The births which alternate with death are of four different kinds. They are, in the first place, either of an *ovarious* nature, such as fishes, serpents, and birds of every species; or they are, secondly, *placental*, which includes the human and all animal births. A third kind is the *humectous* birth, including the generation of flies, gnats, and worms, which are bred from moisture. The fourth and last kind of births may be called the *apparitional*, and comprehends the Dews, becoming suddenly manifest as such in the appropriate regions.

All beings subject to these births are a prey to the changes of time, and there is not one who in a consecutive series of generations is begotten by the same father, born by the same mother, or who belongs to

the same tribe or country. At one time the soul is inhabiting a human being, at another some brute animal, enjoying the pleasures and enduring the pains consistent with the previous merit or demerit.

The miseries natural to beings who are constrained thus to travel the endless circle of birth, decay, and death, after the various stages of pleasures, are great and numerous. The number of disorders, distempers, and casualties which afflict the transmigrating soul, are estimated to amount to no less than two hundred and three. In death, the nine hundred nerves and veins are snapped asunder, the three hundred bones are fractured, and life is extinguished!

The perpetual causes of the successive births of all transmigratory beings, in the various retributive states of happiness and of woe, are ignorance, passion, avarice, fruition of avarice, and concupiscence. If the virtuous affections prove predominant, they will superinduce future felicity. If sinful passions prove predominant, they will insure the just retribution of new births in the regions of misery and woe.

Now, it sometimes happens, that some wise, virtuous, compassionate, and merciful man, contemplating the incalculable miseries endured by the multitudes of beings who travel on the stage of a transitory world, resolves upon acquiring omniscience, and becoming a Buddha, in order to rescue those hapless beings. For that purpose he maintains throughout a million Asankas of Calpas, the mental aspiration of

becoming a Buddha. During the next nine hundred thousand Asankas of Calpas, he retains his resolution, and beholds, during that time, as many as three hundred and eighty-seven thousand Buddhas. In the next four hundred thousand Asankas of Calpas he obtains admission to the presence of twenty-four Buddhas, from each of which he receives the assurance that at a certain future period he will succeed in his wishes to become a Buddha.

From this time he is exempt from being born in eighteen conditions, which would disqualify him for being a fit candidate for Buddahood. He enjoys the privilege of not being born of a deaf, blind, dumb, idiot, cripple, savage, slave, hermaphrodite, or a deformed person. His parent will not be larger than an elephant, nor smaller than a snipe; nor yet will he descend from wretched demons, and evil spirits. He will be endowed with compassion, benevolence, forbearance, and equanimity, practising charity in every stage of his upward travels. He has not only to bestow riches upon the necessitous, but he has to give his wife, his children, to those who require servants! Yea, he is not to refuse his own blood, flesh, his eyes, his head, his limbs, when he has opportunity of sacrificing them meritoriously!

It will appear from the following table what a quantity of eyes, limbs, heads, flesh, and blood, a candidate for Buddhahood will have sacrificed during the above-mentioned introductory period of four hundred

thousand Asankas of Calpas as part only of the time of his probation:—

Ten decads are equal to one hundred.
Ten hundred are equal to one thousand.
One hundred thousand are equal to one Laksha.
One hundred Lakshas are equal to one Kela, or Koti.
One hundred Lakshas of Koti are equal to one Koti pre Koti.
One hundred Lakshas of Koti pre Koti are equal to one Nahuta.
One hundred Lakshas of Nahuta are equal to one Ninnahuta.
One hundred Lakshas of Ninnahuta are equal to one Akshohini.
One hundred Lakshas of Akshohini are equal to one Bindu.
One hundred Lakshas of Bindu are equal to one Arbuda.
One hundred Lakshas of Arbuda are equal to one Nirarbuda.
One hundred Lakshas of Nirarbuda are equal to one Ahaha.
One hundred Lakshas Ahaha are equal to one Ababa.
One hundred Lakshas of Ababa are equal to one Atata.
One hundred Lakshas of Atata are equal to one Soghandika.
One hundred Lakshas of Soghandika are equal to one Uppala.
One hundred Lakshas of Uppala are equal to one Kummuda.
One hundred Lakshas of Kummuda are equal to one Poondarika.
One hundred Lakshas of Poondarika are equal to one Paduma.
One hundred Lakshas of Paduma are equal to one Kathaa.
One hundred Lakshas of Kathaa are equal to one Maha Kathaa.
One hundred Lakshas of Maha Kathaa are equal to one Asanka.

Now the aspiring Buddha is to pass through a period of no less than two million three hundred thousand of similar Asankas of Calpas. In order to form an idea of *one Calpa*, which term does not occur in the above table, we are called upon by the Buddhists to imagine a cube of solid rock, whose squares are four gows each. A person, they say, endowed with the

power of soaring in the air, perhaps passes over it *once in a thousand years*, allowing the hem of his garment to trail on the rock. The rock might, in consequence of such slight attrition occurring at such long intervals, become dwindled to the size of a mustard seed, but *the years of a Calpa will not have expired!* Thus the number of an individual's lives in the course of one Calpa is inconceivable; likewise the drops of blood, the morsels of flesh, and the number of eyes which he must have sacrificed during the above period of two million three hundred thousand of Asankas of Calpas is altogether bewildering, and surpasses all conception. Yet it must be understood that such sacrifices are only taken into account when rendered willingly, and with the sacred purpose in view; but they avail nothing if extorted or yielded from vain motives and futile ostentation.

In the process of time this eminent being receives his penultimate birth in the region of Tusita, and expatiates on the felicities of that divine state which extends to seventy-five Koti and sixty Lakshas of years. Towards the close of that life, the gods of a thousand worlds assemble at his mansion, and announce that the time of his becoming a Buddha is at hand. Having been enclosed for ten months "*like a golden statue in a diamond shrine*," he is born in due time, and received into a golden net, and placed on celestial linen. And whilst the earth puts forth blossoms of Lotus, all the gods of the four quarters exclaim: "*In*

all these realms there is not one greater than thou!" He then proclaims his own pre-eminence with the voice of a mighty lion, in the four quarters of the globe, saying: "*I am the most excellent in the world; I am supreme in the world; this is my last life; I shall not be born again.*" This is the method and the process of every one Buddha. And, having reached that eminence, and being moved by the matchless compassion and benevolence of his nature, he provides a refuge and protection for those who are tormented by the effects of their evil works, in teaching them the way of truth; the sum and substance of which is, that alms, abstaining from evil, and contemplation, follow the virtuous person into all his future state of existence. Even as one's shadow attends only on his own person, and never on that of another, so whatever merit one may have acquired, or whatever demerit he may have incurred, adheres to that identical individual alone, and, following him into futurity, superinduces appropriate retributions.

Now in all this we hear nothing of God as the author of salvation. And to the whole brotherhood of Buddhas we must object on several grounds. It is true, they are represented as being moved by matchless compassion on contemplating their fellow men under the pressure of the miseries which they endure. But they were, after all, mere men, who in addition teach as one of the sublime truths which they discovered during a period of time exceeding two millions of

Asankas of Calpas, that every one is to suffer or enjoy what he merits or deserves, and that no vicarious mediation is possible!

Buddha is said to have sacrificed drops of blood, morsels of flesh, numbers of eyes, heads, wives, and children, for the sake of obtaining Buddhahood, which, if taken at the rate of a unit in each Calpa, would amount to four Lakshas of Asankas, and the aggregate must therefore have been exceeding one thousand of oceans in quantity, and the stars of ten thousand heavens in number. But for all these wild ideas we have no further authority than the naked statement of a set of men, unsupported by either historical or internal evidence. *Jesus Christ, by once shedding his blood, has perfected for ever them that believe on his name!*

Buddha was a man, vile and sinful like all the rest, and it was part of his work to subdue the corruptions in his own nature. In order to become a god of gods by his own efforts, and able to teach mankind sublime truths, the candidate for Buddhahood was to "*aspire*" after this exalted station during one million of Asankas of Calpas, each of which was of inconceivable length. After the expiration of this period, he was to "*express*" his resolve for nine hundred thousand Asankas of Calpas. After the lapse of these countless ages, it required another four hundred thousand Asankas of Calpas to obtain the assurance from his predecessors, that at a certain period he should succeed in his efforts. And, amidst all this, he is to be employed in sacrificing

blood, limbs, eyes, heads, lives, wives, and children! If, therefore, the lives which the candidate must have sacrificed defy all calculation, what shall we say of the generations of human souls which have passed away without the benefit of his "sublime truths" before he was made perfect! But he has now only obtained the assurance of becoming a Buddha, and it will require fifty-nine Koti and sixty Lakshas of years more, before he can proclaim his own pre-eminence *with the voice of a mighty lion!*

How different the case of our blessed and adorable Saviour! There was indeed a preparation on the part of the world which was to be redeemed; but his atonement was retrospective as well as prospective; whilst his own personal preparation did not exceed the number of thirty years! And whilst Buddha is lost in obtaining Ninrana, *Christ Jesus liveth for ever to make intercession for us!* The "four sublime truths" which Buddha attained, it is worthy to observe, contain, after all, nothing which men did not already know. He teaches them, for instance, that they are *really miserable*, a truth which they felt already painfully enough; and the other verities which he teaches the world are of a similar character. And then, when we recollect the number of unmeasured Calpas during which Buddha had to transmigrate, it would speak, after all, very unfavourably of the efficacy of the means which he adopted and which he recommends to others for obtaining perfection! He wasted his time

in preaching eighty-four thousand sermons on good and evil, giving rules for conduct, and teaching methods to subdue evil propensities; but we assert that our Lord's one Sermon on the Mount contains more true wisdom and divine morality than all the sermons of the twenty-five Buddhas, which they propounded to the world during the unmeasured Asankas of eternal ages! We do readily admit that Buddhism has done much, comparatively speaking, towards the partial civilization of Central Asia, and other countries. We rejoice to find that there is more stress laid upon the keeping of the precepts of Buddha than on the offering of flowers, and rice, and sandal-wood, and other things. But the Ethics of Buddhism have been greatly exaggerated by European writers. The practical precepts of Buddhism are ten in number. The *major* precepts are, not to kill any thing alive; not to steal; not to commit adultery; not to bear false witness; and not to drink wine. They are to practise instead the five following virtues,—humanity, prudence, justice, sincerity, and temperance. The *minor* precepts are likewise five in number. They are, not to take elevated seats; not to use flowers and ribands upon the dress; not to indulge in singing and dancing; not to wear ornaments or jewels on the hand; not to eat after midday or noon! The minor precepts seem chiefly to relate to the Clergy.

The keeping of these laws will entitle a man to be born among the higher intelligences; but whosoever

neglects these precepts, and dies without any merit, has to descend to the lowest of hells, and begin his migrations afresh! How different the royal law of the Decalogue in the Bible, if compared to the ten commandments of Buddhism! The latter are devoid of every religious foundation. Yea, the very precepts are given differently in some places; some being left out, others are inserted instead. And as Buddhism is ignorant of the nature of sin, so it holds out no heaven and no hell, in spite of its speaking of one hundred and thirty hells, and of eighteen heavens! Fate cannot be propitiated, necessity cannot be evaded, and where the sense of accountableness is extinguished, there can be no repentance, no fear, no gratitude, no hope! Knowledge only is virtue; and apathy the highest bliss. This is a negation of Religion, and annihilation of all moral sense and moral feeling. And then, what are the negative virtues of Buddhism? What the qualifications of a man for heaven, who does not steal, nor tell untruth, who is not proud, who destroys no animal life, who wears no gay apparel, uses no perfumes, who neither sits nor sleeps in lowly places, nor eats out of prescribed hours, who neither paints his body nor his hair, who does not lie on soft beds, and possesses no gold and silver?

It could not be our present object to enter into the subject of Buddhism, with its boundless field of literary research. The late Abel Remusat of Paris, having devoted twenty years, in the prime of life, to the study of

Buddhism in its exoteric and esoteric forms, confessed. at the end of that period, that he was still an inquirer into the arcana of Buddhist lore. After such a confession from such a man, it can hardly be expected that we can state in these few pages all that is desirable to be known upon the subject. It will, however, suffice to show how deficient and how poor have been the elements of religious truth in this mighty branch of Natural Religion.

It may, perhaps, be expected, before we leave the subject, that we should say a word upon the affinity of the ecclesiastical polity of the Church of Rome, and the ecclesiastical constitution of Buddhism. We have, indeed, some very remarkable coincidences before us. Who can overlook the numbers of Buddhist monasteries, with their different orders, occupations, and their adoption of the vows of celibacy? The High Priest, or the High Lama of Tibet, is found in many points to resemble the Pope of the Church of Rome. We have hosts of begging monks, whose demeanour, whose dress and customs are much like those of the Church of Rome. Nunneries, too, are as frequent as amongst the Roman Catholics. The fastings, the contemplations, the chantings of sacred hymns, the use of rosaries, of images, of candles, of incense amongst both are found to be extremely alike. Amongst both we have pilgrimages to sacred places, which contain the relics of some saint or other. The religious ceremonies are equally imposing and com-

plicated. The ringing of bells, the richly ornamented robes of the Buddhist priest who serves at the altar, the use of sacred water, the keeping of Saints' days, and other particulars, cannot fail to surprise us in the ceremonial of the Buddhistical worship. Now it is a common idea, that in the earliest times, the Nestorians propagated Christianity in Tibet, and that the religion of the Grand Lama of Tibet has an admixture of the Christian faith. At all events, it seems to be established, that Buddhism has been entirely changed, and that its present constitution is, perhaps, not older than the fourth century of our era. If this be, indeed, the case, the very striking analogy would be no longer a mystery.

7. In turning from the combined efforts of the several nations which have embraced Buddhism, we meet, on the extreme boundaries of the East, the remarkable nation of *the Chinese*; a nation which was enjoying the blessings of comparative civilization, whilst the countries in the Western outskirts of the Eastern hemisphere were still sitting in utter darkness, without a glimpse of light to fall upon their state of barbarity and ignorance. If we inquire as to the state of natural Religion amongst them, we discover that it embodied, in its more primitive stages, some few remarkable and venerable remnants of a Patriarchal Monotheism. But the worship of the heavenly bodies, the deification of the elements and of their ancestors, prevailed at a very early period amongst them. *Heaven*, *earth*, and their

ancestors, seem to have been the divine Triad amongst the Chinese from times immemorial, whilst they are actually ignorant of a word which signifies God, independent of that which is used for heaven.

In ordinary conversation, the sun and the moon are spoken of as the great male and female divinities; whilst at the time of the winter solstice they have a general thanksgiving to the fire, or its presiding deity, for his preserving care during the past year. With this system of a physical and astronomical Religion were originally combined some noble elements. They knew of a divine Being, who was so far of a spiritual character as to be incapable of being worshipped through images; who was Lord over all; who knows all things, and penetrates all things; who without ears hears all things, and having no eyes sees all things, and who is generally endowed with the several metaphysical attributes of the Deity. But these grand ideas of the Supreme Deity were soon smothered, amidst the innovations of the several sects which were successively grafted upon it; and although China was never free from idolatry, the evil was yet greatly aggravated by new sectarian systems.

It has been the general idea, that the Religion of Confutse, or Confucius, is the established Religion of China; but, strictly speaking, he was as little a religious teacher as he was a philosopher. Confucius, indeed, exhorted to the practice of virtue, and enforced a moral code of comparative purity, but his precepts

related chiefly to political economy. He is considered to be author of five "kings," or books. One of the books contains historical notices of princes and rulers of the Chinese in days of old. Another "king" preserves the favourite sayings of emperors, politicians, and philosophers, and gives an account of the bliss and glory which the Chinese enjoyed under the rule of these sovereigns, who governed them in days of comparative innocence and purity, exhibiting many ideal sketches, which are no where realized. The Chinese have, therefore, in common with other Pagan nations, pursued the shadows of an abstract felicity and virtue, which are supposed to have existed in former days, in order to disguise the fearful realities of sin, and the miseries incident to the fall of man. A third book or "king" preserves some three hundred chosen national songs of their ancestors, the subjects of which are the manners and customs of the people, the vices and virtues of their sovereigns, the duties of hospitality to strangers, and of obedience to the laws of the heavenly realm of the Chinese Empire. These hymns are, finally, in honour of heaven, and the most celebrated Patriarchs of the nation. A fourth book contains rules for private life, the intercourse of friends, precepts for children and parents, subjects and rulers. It contains models for some three thousand ceremonies and compliments, such as bowing, saluting, eating, drinking; it prescribes rules for marrying, and being given in marriage, sickness,

death, burial, mourning, and similar occurrences in common life. The last of the five books ascribed to Confucius is of a strictly Cabalistic character. It pretends to explain what some ancient sage has attempted to express by six perfect and six broken lines. And whosoever has gained a knowledge of the secrets of this Chinese Apocalypsis, has obtained a key to all mysteries.

These are evidently books which are far from being able to lay claim to a religious character. They contain severally a collection of precepts of a motley description, referring to common life and the interests of the state; and we find occasionally interspersed religious sentiments, apparently with no other view than to supply, in a small measure, the absence of everything that could satisfy the religious wants of immortal souls, and to give authority and consistency to a mass of heterogeneous precepts and ceremonial observances. And in order to pay their debt of gratitude for these achievements of Confucius, the Chinese have erected, in every town of the empire, a public building, which is called the *house of Confutse*. In the large hall of this building is a tablet, on which is written the golden inscription, "O Confutse, our adorable Lord, be pleased to descend in spirit, and rejoice in this our adoration, which we bring before thee in great humility." And on a certain day, the learned people of the place bring fruits, wine, flowers, and other odoriferous things before the tablet, and

burn incense. To obtain similar honours after death is the chief motive which the Chinese has in adhering to the precepts of the Ancients.

We have in Confucius the politician of the Chinese empire. His books and doctrines all relate to the common affairs of life and the concerns of the empire, without reference to God and eternity. The spirit of the politician makes all to bear upon the more general benefit of the nation; the precepts are considered good and laudable as long as they are calculated to promote these interests; and whilst all the passions of the human heart in its natural state, such as prudence, pride, ambition, are kindled by a similar system, the very fountains of pure morality are naturally destroyed. The absence of a priesthood in such a system cannot be surprising; the natural Religion of the Chinese is stamped with a political character. Every public officer of the state is legally authorized to perform the ceremonies of Religion. And we can well conceive that the three thousand ceremonies which are annually performed, are gone through without a thought, and without a spark of devotional feeling. The priestly magistrate of the Chinese realm has no more warmth of feeling during these functions than the worshipper of the Lama, *who writes his petition upon a bit of paper, and exposes it to the wind, which he considers equivalent to his making personal supplication!* He burns his gold paper with the same indifference with which another

constructs a "mill of prayer," by which his desires are to be kept in constant motion; and by which his petitions continually ascend and descend before the Deity!

The character of God, as Creator of the universe, is unknown in this system. The dualism of light and darkness, of heaven and earth, of male and female, are ideas which are conspicuous throughout the system of Confucius. The beginning of heaven and earth, and the end of the created universe, are things unheard of in their sacred books. The creation as it now appears, is to be attributed to a process in nature. We might expect that so loose a system of Religion would not escape the philosophical speculations of thinking men. Hence, we observe that this system soon branched into two systems of religious philosophy, one of which was bordered on a rude, degrading Materialism, whilst the other rushed to the extreme of a subtle system of Atheism. And whilst the vulgar mass of the population was overwhelmed by a grovelling superstition, the more educated class of the nation became the victims of a bold infidelity. The national deity, however, has always been the *state*, the monarch the officiating high-priest, and the Chinese realm "the kingdom of heaven!"

The Confucian creed is absorbed with the things of this world; another branch of the Religion of the Chinese takes no notice of temporal matters, and it is, on that account, understood and followed by a very few people. The mystical philosopher Laokiun, the

founder of the *Tao-tse* sect, maintained that Chaos was before heaven and earth; and previous to the Chaos was a silent being, immeasurable, sole, immutable, full of activity, the parent of the universe. Laokiun did not pretend to know its name, but he called it "*Reason*." Man had his model from the earth, the earth her model from heaven, heaven from Reason, and Reason was the original of all things! The "Reason" of this religious sect, as being the fountain of all intelligence, has some affinity to the Logos of the Grecian philosophers, and the Honover of the Persians. Virtue was, in some instances, encouraged in the Tao-tse system of Religion by motives which were drawn from a future state. But idolatry was still more encouraged in this system of the Chinese Mythology, than it was in that of Confucius; although the latter is, in other respects, inferior to the former. It was a Religion of Nature; and Nature knew how to secure her interests. To be happy, and to enjoy the pleasures of life, was considered to be the chief thing to be desired. Whilst the lower classes cannot dive into the system itself, they can heartily join in its practical results, which were, living in pleasure, and being dead whilst they live!

The fear of death, which puts an end to the pleasures of life, produced, however, an uncomfortable feeling, and the founder of this sect was induced to search for the nectar of immortality; it was, however, only natural death whose power they desired to sub-

due by the desired essence of life. It was in searching for some means to prevent the natural death, that intercourse was to be held with the world of spirits. This led to all manner of witchcraft and consulting of familiar spirits; they entertained even the wild idea of inventing the art of flying, in order to raise their bodies into heaven without the crisis of the natural death! The hope of avoiding death induced many to become followers of this system of Laokiun. The "doctors of Reason," for this is the meaning of Tao-tse, became fools in their wisdom; and in their folly they filled heaven and earth with innumerable demons and spirits; they practised at all times witchcraft, astrology, magic, and other favourite arts of a base superstition. The teachers of Lao-tse, or of the "doctrine of the word," live in mountains and deserts as monks and ascetics. This sect has, however, their married priests in towns and cities; and even those who have yet retained their ascetic character are now spread all over the land as religious teachers and mendicants, as magicians, charmers, and quacks; and thousands of human lives fall a sacrifice to their horrible treatment. Although the Tao-tse sect had few followers at the commencement, it spread by degrees all over the several provinces, and was at one time even countenanced by the sovereign of the land.

There is, however, another Religion, which has found a gracious reception amongst the Chinese population, and this is the *Buddhist Religion*, which was propa-

gated in the Chinese empire by foreign missionaries with great success in the first century of the Christian era. But however zealously the Tao-tse sect and that of Buddhism might propagate their respective religious systems in the country, the Confucian creed, if such it may be termed, maintained its stand against every innovation respecting the constitution of the empire and its government. The foundations of the empire seemed to be laid deep, and could not be easily shaken by any foreign influence. The history of China, indeed, speaks of severe disturbances, which were connected both with the spread of the Tao-tse and the Buddhist Religions; but these feuds were chiefly carried on between the respective priesthoods of these sects, and did not affect either the mass of the people or the government of the country. Buddhism, though foreign as to its origin, seemed to have made the greatest impression upon the Chinese mind. But although coming from another country, it had many things in common with the already existing systems of Religion; and it received again a strong tinge from the national superstition, thus causing it to differ in some respects from the Buddhist Religion of other countries. Since one of the Buddhist priests was canonized a Shangtee in the thirteenth century, Buddhism has obtained a strong ascendency over the ancient sects of the Chinese; and when the Mongols had succeeded in obtaining supreme power in China, the imperial court was highly favourable to Buddhism,

which was already the Religion of the Mongols; and there is sufficient reason to consider the Buddhist Religion as the national creed of the Chinese empire.

Convents without number, and an army of begging monks, infest the country and deceive the people with their rosaries, their mummeries, and their legends. In the temples, incense is profusely burnt, bells are ringing, drums are beaten, and the prayers of the Buddha are muttered. In every corner of the towns and cities a monk has placed himself to bring heaven and hell in glowing pictures before his audience, in order to obtain alms for himself, and gifts for his convent. How numerous the Buddhists must be in China will appear from the fact, that the priesthood alone has been estimated at more than two millions.

It is, however, remarkable that neither of these three systems of spurious Religion in China seems to have made any strongly marked impression upon the nation. There are Buddhist and Tao priests, but frequently the people do not rank themselves under them as leaders. As it was in the days of Pliny amongst the Romans, the doctrines of all three sects are often received by the unlearned as equally worthy of belief, and by the learned they are equally despised and ridiculed. Whilst the priesthood of the Tao and Buddha sects are generally ignorant of their sacred books, the vulgar superstitions float at random upon the popular mind. The worship of the ancestors seems to be the Shibboleth of all parties.

If we sum up the articles of the natural Religion of the Chinese, we must declare that they are a people without God in this world; and that although they attained a considerable degree of civilization at a very early period, they were ever far behind the rest of other Asiatic nations in their religious speculations. Where is the wise, where is the scribe, where is the "*doctor of reason*," where is the disputer of this world? God hath made foolish the wisdom of the Chinese, after that by wisdom they knew not God.

The educated Chinese never speaks on religious subjects. God and Religion is neither the first nor the second concern of his existence. If you speak to him of things eternal, he asks with a contemptuous smile, whether any one has seen heaven and hell. He laughs at the supposed fancies of a future world as ridiculous things, which are below the level of those things which concern the wise and the learned. And then the State is the Deity, and the Emperor its high-priest; not because he is full of patriotism and loyalty, but because these are the customs of the nation. The vulgar mass create their deities after their own pleasure. The image of the Chinese serpent, or any other form, will serve his purpose. In Java, a *print of Napoleon* has been made the guardian deity of a Chinese. He erects his altar before his gods, and burns upon it daily a small bit of Chinese gold paper, of which he receives a thousand leaves for a Spanish dollar. Although this paper is very inexpensive, the

Chinese annually burn it at the rate of one hundred and sixty millions of Spanish dollars! But all this is done, not so much with a view to honour the idol, as under the impression that in so doing they will not be without money in the world to come! Twice a-year he sacrifices pigs and fowls upon the tombs of his ancestors, which he, however, consumes himself with a singular appetite; and once a-year he adorns his house with lamps, when all the cities and towns and villages of the Chinese empire are brightly illuminated!

Notwithstanding this extreme poverty of the Chinese Religion, it embodies some few relics of primitive revelation. They have an ancient tradition that heaven and earth had a beginning; that Niu-hoa had taken yellow earth, (yellow being the sacred colour of the Chinese;) that he had kneaded the same, and from it framed man. The first pair of mankind was called Prigaurata and Utanapa. They have distinct recollections of a Paradisaical state; they know of a garden of bliss, with a yellow fountain of immortality, which divided into four streams. It was adorned with all manner of trees, especially one which is remarkable for being called the tree of endless life; and the enjoyment of its fruit produced immortality. Man lived in peace, and was surrounded by the animals, who were yet harmless and inoffensive. But all was lost by the sensuality of the human race. "*Our corruption does not come from Tien, but the*

cause of it is the woman. We possessed happy fields, the woman has deprived us of them. All was subject to us, but the woman has brought us into slavery. And when man was fallen, all wild animals, birds, and insects and reptiles became our enemies." One of the "kings" commences with the account of a flood as a tremendous catastrophe. And other, (non-canonical,) books often speak of such a visitation; but Niu-hoa is said to have subdued the waters by the wood, or by the ship built from wood; and the firmament, which had been broken, and poured down its waters, was restored by a stone of five colours, which is evidently an allusion to the rainbow as the sign of peace. According to another tradition, the mother of Fohi was encircled by a rainbow; and Fohi himself is represented as having trained seven kinds of animals, and then sacrificed them to the Deity!

Nor could we justly deny to that remarkable people, that they, like other Gentiles, did feel after the "*Lord*" Jesus, if haply they might feel after him and find him. It is said of Confucius that he declared, in one of his last hours, "*The Holy One shall appear from the West.*" How probable that this was a feeble echo of the promised Seed of the woman, which may have been revived at his own day from the Persian empire, over which the Israelites were scattered in those days! The Holy One which was expected is described as a person "who knows all

things; whose words furnish instruction; whose thoughts are truth; who is altogether heavenly and wonderful; whose wisdom knows no limit; before whose eyes futurity is unsealed; whose speech is full of energy. He is one with Tien, (heaven or God); without him the world knows not God; he only can bring unto God an acceptable sacrifice; and the nations expect him as withering plants are expecting the shower from heaven." Again; "He is a man, the highest of mankind; the most beautiful of all men; the most excellent amongst men; he is the wonderful man; he is the first-born! He will renovate the universe; he will change the public manners; he will expiate the sins of the world; he will die in pain, and open the heaven." Again; "Oh, how exalted are the ways of the Holy One! His virtue shall embrace the universe, he will communicate to all new life, and new strength, and raise them again to heaven. What a broad path shall be opened unto us; what new laws and duties shall be enforced! What excellent customs and festivities! But how should they be kept, if he gave not first of all the example? His advent alone can prepare and facilitate their being fulfilled. Hence the saying of all centuries: The ways of perfection shall only then be trodden more frequently, when the Holy One has consecrated them by his own footsteps." Again; "It is reserved to the Great Saint, the Holy One of all ages and all nations,

to unite in his person all the ways of wisdom, and to reach the perfection of all virtue. His penetrating spirit, his prudence, his intentions, and his counsels, shall embrace the government of the world without effort. The nobility of his soul; his magnanimity, his complacent unassuming demeanour, shall unite all interests, and gain the heart of all men."

We confess our suspicion, that the wily Jesuit was, perhaps, concerned in the composition of some of these expressions, which we have inserted in the above lines. One thing is certainly true, that Christian ideas were propagated in China at the commencement of the Christian era. There is, hence, room for doubts respecting the authenticity and genuineness of similar pieces of sacred literature. Yet we should be sorry to take away from the Chinese the last and only shred of good sense in their whole system of Religion. We will, in justice, allow them the merit which we readily concede to all Pagan nations, that they were feeling after and expecting "*the Desire of all nations!*" It was from similar ideas which are met with amongst the Chinese, that the latter Jesuits extracted so bright a picture, and discovered so strong a resemblance to the Religion of the Bible. The superstitions of the Chinese were quickly metamorphosed into the Christian Religion. The bells, the burning of incense, the rosary, the convents, the monasteries for males and females, and the mystical prayers of the Buddhist, were found

so analogous to similar practices in the Romish Church, that they were easily combined together. The three Pagan deities were confounded with the blessed Trinity: the blessed Virgin was substituted for the female divinities of the land. The ancient legends contained in the sacred books of the Chinese were made to harmonise with the Bible, and a mixture of Paganism and Christianity was brought about of the most melancholy description. The Pope remonstrated against the disgraceful proceedings of this missionary band, but the Jesuits paid no heed to his admonition and excommunication. It was only the prohibition of this order in many parts of Europe, and the death of the emperor Konghe, which put an end to this work of spurious conversion!

We have now reviewed, imperfectly though it may have been, the natural Religion of the Gentile world, with special reference to Oriental Paganism, and the specific results of Eastern speculations in matters of Religion. And can we find an estimate more true and more to the point than that of the inspired Apostle: *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned?* The wisdom of this world is foolishness. The Lord taketh the wise in their own craftiness. He "*knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. Therefore let no man*

glory in men :" but let us ascribe glory and honour to the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; for he alone hath immortality, and *dwelleth in light which no man can approach unto!* Yea, to God, the *only Wise*, be glory, through Jesus Christ for ever! Amen.

END OF VOL. I.

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Mühleisen, John

Genuine and spurious religion a compendious, scriptual and consecutive view of the origin, development and character of different systems of belief
Bd.: 1

London (1849)

H.g.hum. 160 h-1
urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10435542-5